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ABSTRACT

The contribution of Romain Rolland to Indian studies and the influence of Indian thought on him have not been scrutinized in depth with due attention to details. This is partly due to the fact that a large amount of materials, mainly in the form of correspondence, is yet to be published.

The genuine efforts of the French writer to popularize Indian thought are evident not only in his works on Gandhi, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda but also in his correspondence and other writings such as his introduction to Ananda Coomaraswany's The Dance of Shiva and addresses. The relationship of these efforts with his great endeavour to bring harmony between the East and the West has not been dealt with objectively and carefully.

It is true that Rolland won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1915 for his great novel, Jean-Christophe. But what we tend to forget is the fact that during more than twenty-five years after the publication of this work, his interest in India and its thought was an ever growing one. By his own admission, his thought was enriched by his contact with Indian thought.

Rolland's predisposition to mysticism along with his rejection of the God of the Church and the influence of Spinoza's Ethics, prepared him, so to speak, to embark upon his Indian experiment. His interest in India dates back to

his Ecole Normale Supérieure days when he had the opportunity of admiring Buddhist sculptures at the famous Musée Guimet in Paris. Furthermore, he was fascinated by the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita and echoes of that fascination are evident in his magnum opus, Jean-Christophe and in his L'Ame Enchantée, another great novel.

No sooner had Rolland come into contact with Indian thought than he enthusiastically decided to study it and popularize it in the West. The kinship which he established between his thought and that of India was, no doubt, the main factor which encouraged him to undertake the study. The other factor, which is not less significant, was his ardent desire to build a bridge between the East and the West which, according to him, are the two halves of the human soul. To harmonize the races of the world was his fondest dream.

At the time of Rolland's discovery of Indian thought, Europe was fever-stricken, having gone through World War I, and was on its way to experience yet another catastrophe. Rolland felt that it needed the moral and spiritual help of Asia. Hence the great enthusiasm with which he welcomed Indian thought. His work on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda is an irrefutable testimony to his faith in the universal validity of the Vedantic philosophy as interpreted by the great spiritual leader and his disciple. As he tells us the life story of each of these spiritual giants, he constantly draws the attention of the Western readers to the practical aspects of that philosophy. In the Universal Gospel of Vivekananda, in particular, he finds much to satisfy the spiritual need of the modern world. He is very much attracted by the fact that the Gospel is all-embracing and harmonizes Faith and Reason and, like Vivekananda, he sees in an alliance between Science and Religion, the very salvation of mankind.

The influence of Indian thought on Rolland is evident not only in his constant appeal to Westerners in his work on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda but also in his great novel, L'Ame Enchantée, written during his Indian experiment years. A look at this novel in the light of those very Vedantic principles which he has tried to interpret to Westerners, cannot fail to to reveal how deep the influence is.

Unless we approach Rolland's contribution to Indian studies with due attention to his aim and to the various factors which encouraged his enterprise, we cannot fully appreciate his genuine and noble intentions. His interest in Indian thought was, decidedly, not a passing one nor was the influence of that thought on his own a superficial one.

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INTRODUCTION

Romain Rolland (Clamecy 1866-Vézelay 1944), the 1915 Nobel prize-winner belongs to the group of wartime French literary figures known as militant artists because of their stand against war, materialism, pessimism and for humanism. In company with writers like Roger Martin du Gard, Jules Romains, André Gide, Georges Duhamel, Henri Barbusse, Roland Dorgelès and Paul Vaillant-Couturier, he openly condemned war and worked for a renewal of spiritual life in Europe and for the victory of idealism over pessimism and materialism. Moreover, a plea for international brotherhood is a dominant theme of his literary works. His deep disillusionment regarding the turn of events before and after World War I encouraged him to look towards Asia for spiritual help. His interest in Indian thought is to be considered in the context of his genuine desire to find new means by which the spiritual life of Europe, hopelessly weakened by the forces of pessimism and materialism, could be renewed.

Rolland's contribution to Indian studies in the West has been approached, in the main, rather superficially, though he has proved to be an active spiritual ambassador of India in the West. Most of the critics who have written about his Indian experiment give us the impression that his interest in Indian thought was but a passing one. However, this is far from being the case.

No sooner had Rolland turned towards India than French intellectuals like Henri Massis,[1] a Catholic nationalist critic, denounced him for handing over Europe to Asia. Yet that was the very opposite of his aim: his ceaseless endeavour was rather to unite East and West. Others thought that he was simply bewitched by Hindu mysticism, probably because he was interested in Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, the two spiritual leaders who had conquered his heart because they had "réalisé, avec un charme et une puissnace incomparables, cette splendide symphonie de l'Ame Universelle."[2] and as such had given the world a new hope for survival through their teachings based on Vedantic principles. His study of the life and teachings of these two thinkers is indeed a new approach to Indian studies. His is not the scholarly approach we are dealing with in our first chapter. He had a deep conviction that the findings of scholars and the way in which they were presented were not within the reach of the average readers. His aim was to popularize the universal aspects of Indian thought through the art of biography and through a comparative study of the teachings of his spiritual heroes, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. However, it would be wrong to assume that it was passionate hero-worshipping which drew him towards them: it was first and foremost the universal and practical aspects of their teachings and then the attractiveness of their achievements as spiritual geniuses. Let us recall, in passing, that he came to learn about them at a time when he deeply felt that "l'Europe fiévreuse, qui a tué le sommeil"[3] badly needed the "sang de l'Immortalité".[4] He therefore availed himself of the opportunity which his burgeoning Indian experiment offered him to interpret Ramakrishna's "eau sacrée"[5] in order to "désaltérer la grande soif du monde"[6] and through an interpretation of Vivekananda's idea of a Universal Gospel based on the harmonization of Reason and Faith, to reveal the all-embracing and practical aspects of Vedantic thought.

Rolland's new approach to Indian studies was an outright success: no sooner had his work been published than testimonies to his achievement started flowing in from various parts of the world. Even in India many are those who felt indebted to him for having revealed to them the great personalities of their own spiritual leaders. But what is most interesting is the spontaneous recognition, by the Ramakrishna Order, of the significant contribution of Rolland's work to the dissemination of the thought of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Indeed the warm reception of his work in both the East and the West speaks for itself. It is fair to assert, then, that Rolland had achieved his aim and by doing so had won himself a place among the prominent Orientalists of the West.

Rolland's interest in Indian thought goes beyond the preparation of his Essai sur la Mystique et l'Action de l'Inde Vivante (1929-1930). and, that interest remained keen till the end. It manifests itself in the interest he took in

Jean Herbert's work. It is with great delight that he noted in 1937 the activity of this well-known Indologist:

> Reçu, pendant mon absence en France, de la Mission Ramakrishna à Calcutta, 2 beaux volumes: 'The Cultural Heritage of India' édités pour le centenaire de Ramakrishna. J'admire le vaste développement de la pensée indienne, issue de Vivekananda et Ramakrishna. -J'en remercie la Ramakrishna Mission (lettre au Swami Ashokananda). - En Occident, Jean Herbert, avec une activité remarquable et un zèle passionné, répand, par ses publications de Vivekananda, la pensée Ramakrishniste.[7]

Even more interesting to note is the influence of Indian thought Rolland's own though and writings evident not only in his voluminous correspondence during his Indian experiment years, but also in his great novel, L'Ame Enchantée. Whatever he appreciated in Gandhism and in "la pensée indienne issue de Vivekananda et Ramakrishna" is taken up again in this novel. Gandhi's search for Truth, his doctrine of Non-Violence (Ahisma), the Vedantic conception of Maya, of Karmayoga, of the union with the Absolute (Nirvikalpa Samadhi) and Rolland's own dream of the meeting of Eastern thought with that of the West find their echoes in this work where the author, by his own admission, has expressed his deepest thought.[8] Annette and her son, Marc, have to fight their way out of the world of Maya,armed with Truth. Rolland, playing the part of an adviser, reminds the confused Marc that Gandhi's doctrine of Non-Violence is not compatible with his nature and recommends the Gandhian conception of Truth to him. Futhermore Rolland has Annette to advise her son to be true to his own nature as she is herself. Both stick to Truth in their fight to free their soul from an oppressive world - that post-war world in which everything is *Maya* according to Rolland:

> ...'*tout* *cela* *est* *un* *Jeu*'.
> C'était une disposition générale de l'époque, un phénomène d'après-guerre. L'action avait été si terrible, si intense les passions engagées qu'il fallait, pour pouvoir continuer, détendre la haute pression de l'esprit: - on *jouait* avec la vie; on *jouait* avec le terrible ainsi qu'avec la joie; on *jouait* avec l'amour, avec l'ambition, avec la haine. On *jouait* instinctivement, sans bien se l'avouer... Redoutable danger d'une époque, qui a perdu, pour un temps, le sens des valeurs de la vie et pour qui les plus graves sont devenues des jouets! Il était peu de ces gens qui, les uns plus, les autres moins, ne participassent à cet esprit de *jeu*.[9]

In that world, Annette was no stranger: "Elle y était prédisposée, l'Ame Enchantée!"[10]

In other words, both she and her son were in the clutches of *Maya* and to free them, Rolland prescribes, like *The Bhagavad Gita* and Vivekananda, action in the form of self-sacrifice. Like Rolland, Annette does not believe in the God of the Church.[11] However, she does, like him, have a very deep sense of the Divine and both see their God in action. Whereas he sees the Divine in his activity as an artist:

> Et si j'ai donné ma vie à l'art, c'est qu'il m'est un contact perpétuel avec le divin. Je tâche de communiquer aux autres ce mystérieux toucher de l'Eternel, qui affleure sous les formes vivantes.[12]

she sees Him in her self-sacrifice: "J'agis...Je n'ai pas besoin de croire."[13]

For both Annette and her son, salvation is in action performed with a sincere disinterestedness in the very manner a Vedantist practices *Karma-yoga*. Long before

Rolland's L'Ame Enchantée was published, Tagore had seen the passion for disinterested action in the French writer:

> Men like Rolland have accepted voluntarily the career of penance and purification (Tapasyâ) for the welfare of Humanity as a whole. For them, there does not exist the distinction between their country and the Universe.[14]

And the aim of that "career" was to "unir tous les peuples et toutes les pensées".[15] It was with this mission in mind that Rolland turned towards India.

1 Romain Rolland, letter to Kalidas Nag, May 2, 1925, in Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence (Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1976), p. 45.
Henri Massis, "Romain Rolland parle," L'Opinion, April 24, 1915, pp.257-259.
"M. Rolland ou le dilettantisme de la foi," L'Opinion, August 30, 1913, pp.272-274.
Jugements, II (Paris: Plon, 1924).

2 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Ramakrishna (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, S.A., 1973), p. 16.
Prophets of the New India trans. E.F. Malcolm-Smith (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1930), p. xvi.

> "realised this splendid symphony of the Universal Soul."

3 Ibid., p. 2 and cit. transl., p. xxi.

> "fever-stricken Europe, which has murdered sleep."

4 Ibid.

> "blood of Immortality."

5 Ibid., p. 24 and cit. transl., p. xii.

> "sacred water"

6 Ibid.

> "to slake the great thirst of the world."

7 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943 (Bale: Editions Vineta, 1951), p. 399.

> "Received, during my absence in France, from the Ramakrishna Mission in Calcutta, 2 beautiful volumes: The Cultural Heritage of India edited for the centenary of Ramakrishna. I admire the vast development of Indian thought, sprung from Vivekananda and Ramakrishna. - I thank the Ramakrishna Mission (letter to Swami Ashokananda). - In the West, Jean Herbert, is spreading the thought of Ramakrishna through his publications with a remarkable activity and a passionate zeal."

8 Romain Rolland, letter to his Italian friend, Sofia Bertolini Guerrieri-Gonzaga, November 11, 1927, in Chère Sofia, Cahier 11 (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1960), p. 311.

9 Romain Rolland, L'Ame Enchantée (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1967, p. 772.

The Soul Enchanted, Vol. 4, "The Death of a World" trans. Amalia De Alberti (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1933), p. 48.

"...that all this is nothing but a game.

It was a general disposition of the time, an after-war phenomenon. The strife had been so terrible, the passions engaged so intense, that in order to go on it was necessary to relax the high pressure of the spirit. People played with life; they played with love, with ambition, with hate. They played instinctively, without acknowledging it to themselves. Formidable danger of an epoch which has temporarily lost the sense of life's values, and for which the greatest have become playthings!

There were but few of these people who did not participate, more or less, in this feeling of a game."

10 Ibid.

"She was predisposed towards it, the 'Soul Enchanted'."

11 Ibid., p. 470.

The Soul Enchanted, Vol. 3, "Mother and Son", trans. Van Wyck Brooks (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1927), p. 51.

"Those things, their God, their faith, - I don't believe in them. It is a misfortune. But I respect those who do believe. And when I see men scheming and cheating with their faith, that faith that is not my own - I am ready to defend it. I suffer for it."

12 Romain Rolland, letter to Miss Slade, November 14, 1926, in Gandhi et Romain Rolland: Correspondance (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1969), pp. 28-29.

Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, pp. 79-80.

"and if I've devoted my life to art, it's because it keeps me in perpetual contact with the divinity. I try to pass on to other men that mysterious touch of the Eternal, which is just under the surface of all the forms of life."

13 Romain Rolland, L'Ame Enchantée, p. 652.

The Soul Enchanged, Vol. 3, "Mother and Son", p. 301.

"I act,...I don't need to believe."

[14] Rabindranath Tagore, letter to Kalidas Nag, May 9, 1922, in Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 28.

[15] Romain Rolland, unpublished letter to Alphonse de Châteaubriant, February 17, 1915, available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris.
"to unite all nations and all thoughts"

> "In Europe the arrival from India of translations of such works as the Bhagavad Gita, Kalidasa's Shakuntala, and the Uphanishads produced an exhilarating effect on thinkers for whom Christian doctrines had lost their appeal. Schopenhauer, for example, predicted in 1818 on the basis of his study of the Upanishads that 'the influence of Sanskrit literature will penetrate into Europe not less deeply than did the revival of the Greek classics in the fifteenth century', and that 'Indian wisdom will flow once more over Europe and will transform from top to bottom our science and our thought.'"

Stephen N. Hay, Asian Ideas of East and West
(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 14.

CHAPTER I

INDIAN STUDIES IN EUROPE BEFORE ROMAIN ROLLAND

It is inappropriate to deal with a subject such as Romain Rolland and Indian thought by making a clean sweep of the contribution of the pioneers of Indian studies for, evidently, the French writer has had recourse to the fruit of the labours of some of these pioneers to acquire a sound knowledge of the fundamental principles of Indian thought. If Lafontaine, Voltaire, Hugo, Rabelais, Montaigne, Florian and Michelet in France; Friedrich Schlegel, Schopenhauer, Goethe and Hesse in Germany; Shelley, Southey, Scott and Arnold in England; Paulino Dias, Nascimento Mendonça and Adolpho Costa in Portugal; and Emerson and Eliot in the United States, were able to familiarise themselves with and use Indian thought in their writings, it was mainly due to the dedication of the pioneers. Through their translations and interpretations these scholars had not only made Vedic literature accessible to Western intellectuals but also helped dispel the wrong notions of Westerners concerning the people and culture of India. By making the spiritual message of India accessible to the average reader in the West, Romain Rolland has, admittedly, won himself a respectable place among modern orientalists. But in order to put his significant contribution to Indian studies in its true perspective, we deem it fitting to give here a brief survey of the pioneering work of Western orientalists.

Portuguese Contribution

The genesis of Western contacts with India was far from cultural. When the Portuguese reached the shores of India in 1498, the event was one of great importance in the history of discoveries for it marked the beginning of a permanent relationship of the West with India. Western Indology had to wait for a genuine desire on the part of Western humanism to learn about the languages, literature and thought of the Indian people. Meanwhile, the first contacts did something quite positive: gradually they helped eradicate the outrageous tales about the Indians, tales that had found their way to the West in one manner or other. Currency was being given to these tales as early as Alexander's expedition. But gradually, the West came to learn that India was not, as the tales would have it, peopled with mouthless humans, one-eyed humans, humans with ears large enough to wrap themselves in when going to sleep and similar monstrous creatures. Among the various groups sharing belief in such tales were Christian priests, those of the twelfth century in particular. It was but in the middle ages that the missionaries of Europe found out for themselves not only that such monstrous humans never existed in India but also that the natives were ordinary human beings. However, it took them a fairly long time to realize that the people had a solid spiritual culture. With their preconceived negative views and the difficulties posed by foreign languages, they were, so to speak, not prepared to understand the thought of the people. Besides, the main aim of the discoverers was to expand the kingdom of their motherland and to propagate Christianity. In many cases, like that of Franciscan Jean de Monte-Corvino, the missionaries were responsible for the confusion in the West regarding Indian thought. Though he stayed in an ideal part of the country (Madras) where two great literatures were thriving - Tamil and Sanskrit - Monte-Corvino should have reported better things than that the people had no books, no laws, that they had recorded current business accounts on palm leaves and had no notion of weeks or of months. I may be recalled that Manu had given the laws to that land a long time before Monte-Corvino set foot there and as far as the notion of time goes, the people had known the days of the week and the months of the year for centuries. It was unfortunate for both parties concerned that such flagrant ignorance came from learned witnesses. The fact is that they were seeing things through the coloured glasses of their own spiritual preconceptions. Hence the distorted image of India. Little wonder, then, that it took so long for exact information to reach the West. The notion that the people of Asia were living in complete ignorance and away from truth persisted till almost the end of the fifteenth century. By then, it was possible to see some glimmering of admiration for the East.

The travelling intellectuals did not do much either in elucidating the mystery about India and its people. Most of them looked at the native people and their ways of living through the preconceived notions inculcated by their home cultures. We find a good example of this attitude in the extremely national Portuguese poet, Luiz de Camoes, whose famous patriotic epic, *Os Lusiadas*, contains some flagrant inaccuracies concerning Ceylon (the present Sri Lanka) and the religion of its people. It is true that the epic deals with the discovery and conquest of India by Vasco da Gama. But equally true is the fact that the poet has been negligent is his use of local colour. He saw things with his own eyes but did not discover them through personal experience. Hence the inaccuracy of some of his interpretations.

It was at the beginning of the seventeenth century that one could see a serious attempt made by Westerners at discovering the culture of the people of India. During the sixteenth century, Portuguese missionaries failed to make significant progress because of their ignorance of the culture of the people they were dealing with. Father Jão de Lucena (1549-1608) who wrote a book on the *History of the Life of Father Francisco de Xavier and what the other Priests of the Company of Jesus did in India* in 1600, revealed in this work a good picture of the ignorance of most of the early Portuguese writers when it is question of the Hindu scriptures. Referring to Lucena's description of the Hindu religion in his book, *Viaggi* (1681, Pietro della Valle, the Italian traveller-writer, writes: "About things pertaining to Heaven and eternal things, they have among them little or no accounts."[1]

Ethel Pope makes no mistake when she remarks:

> We may judge from this that Lucena, like other Portuguese writers of this period, was not acquainted with the vast Sanskrit religious literature and based his knowledge merely on what he learned from indirect sources about India.[2]

The first book on India written by a Portuguese appeared but in 1510. Its author, Duarte Barbosa, had spent a fairly long time in those parts of India which he has described in his book. However, in his case too, one can expect to find inaccuracies in his descriptions of religious and cultural activities of the Hindus and the Muslims.

Another publication of historical value came from the pen of Gaspar Correa (1495-1561) who served as a soldier in India for some seventeen years. His *Lendas da India* (Stories of India) were published in four volumes by the Portuguese Royal Academy of Sciences more than three centuries after they were written and five years later (1869), the work was translated into English by Hon. E. J. Stanley.

Among the Chroniclers, the name of another soldier-writer, Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, is worthy of mention. He is the author of *History of the Discovery and Conquest of India by the Portuguese* (1544). Castanheda spent some ten years in India with the firm intention of doing research work for his book. The method of his investigation is described by Ethel Pope thus:

> During the time he was in India, he was making investigations both by examining all records and by making zealous enquiries from the captains and noblemen whom he met, in order to write a faithful account of the discoveries and conquests of the Portuguese in India. In this laudable enterprise he spent all his wealth and he was forced for want of money and health to return to Portugal, where he accepted a position in the University of Coimbra as Beadle in the Faculty of Arts, Corrector of Proofs for the University and Librarian.[3]

We may assume, then, that Castanheda's work is of some historical importance. He not only had a working knowledge of the language of the people but was also sincere and impartial. His account did not hide the errors and crimes of his fellow-countrymen in India.

A second chronicler (the first of the Portuguese State) wrote a historical work - Decadas da Asia - which is regarded as a document of much historical value even in our time. He is Joao de Barros (1496-1570). Commenting on his work, Ethel Pope says:

> As a writer on India Joao de Barros is most valuable. He has given us graphic descriptions of personnages like Ibrahim Adil Shah and his minister, Asad Khan, and he speaks of the relations of the Portuguese with other States in India. Regarding information about the Kings of the Orient and their peoples, he obtained documents to verify all his statements. He was not content with letters only, but sent for the chronicles of those kingdoms written in their respective languages, as we see in the First Decada, Book IX, Chapter III, in which he relates information about the Malabaris taken from one of their religious books and from their history. He had also with him the chronicles of the Kings of Gujerat, Vijianagar and the Deccan.[4]

Diogo de Couto, a personal friend of the famous Camões, stepped into de Barros' shoes and continued the historical work after some eight years of military service in India.

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica (9th Edition, pp. 375-376) de Couto was the first Western writer to identify the Christian legend of "Barlaam and Josaphat" with that of Buddha.

Among other Portuguese historians who have done some significant work, is Father João de Lucena, the biographer of Father Francisco de Xavier. In his ten volumes information about the people and their customs abound but, as we have said earlier, he was not always right in his interpretations. Garcia da Orta, a medical doctor and Professor of Philosophy in the University of Lisbon was the first one to be interested in Indian Botany. His work on Indian herbs and drugs, Conversations about Herbs and Drugs, is of historical importance for in it the author "gives detailed information in these sketches about the Kings of India and their titles, which are relatively the most exact which are given to us by Portuguese writers of the sixteenth century. It is from these that results in a great part the knowledge which they had at the time in Europe about those Princes and States, through the résumé made in Latin by Carlo d'Ecluze."[1] Orta's work was well-known in Europe where it was translated in several languages.

It was not uncommon to come across Portuguese works on India written in Spanish during the second half of the sixteenth century and the early years of the seventeenth century. This literary event occurred after the accession of the Spanish kings to the Portuguese throne. Of these works we may mention Manuel de Faria e Sousa's *Asia Portuguesa* whose English version appeared in 1694. Another author worthy of mention in this category, is Father Sebastiâo Manrique Maya whose work on the *Itinerary of the Missions of Oriental India with a Summary of the Relations with the great and opulent Mogul Emperor, Shah Jehan, and other Kings in whose kingdom the Monks of St. Augustine lived*, was published in Rome in 1653. However, the Spanish language did not reduce the popularity of Portuguese in India. It remained the only working language till the English conquest.

At this point a few words on the influence of the Jesuits on Portuguese literature on India would not be out of place. It is chronologically fitting to mention that the Company of Jesus was very active in the second half of the sixteenth century, in Goa, the centre of the Portuguese colony. Being there mainly for religious propaganda, the Jesuits made it a point more effective. Among them, Father Beschi from Italy, became a prominent classical Tamil writer and the French Fathers Pons and Calmette contributed to the studies of Sanskrit manuscripts. An Englishman, Father Stephens, proved his mastery of Sanskrit besides acquiring a sound knowledge of Marathi and Concani. His Grammar of the Concani language is considered to be the first Grammar of an Indian language written by a European. Referring to these missionaries in his work *Akbar the Great Mogul: 1542-1605*, Vincent Smith writes: "The Fathers were highly educated men, trained for accurate observation and scholarly writing."[6] While their religious mission brought them close to the common people, their political duties offered them the privilege of becoming well acquainted with court people. Hence the historical value of their writings. The documents of the Italian Jesuit, Roberto di Nobili, for instance, still continue to serve as source material of value to orientalists everywhere. Nobili initiated a new approach. He aimed at knowing the country and its people first. He therefore began by learning Indian languages like Tamil, Telegu and Sanskrit. The seriousness of his studies was a clear evidence of his firm intention to discover the culture of the Indians. In a relatively short time his new approach enabled him to acquire a solid knowledge of the customs, languages and literatures of the Indian people. However, his documents failed to enlighten the Western mind at first because of the fact that the prejudices regarding Asian paganism had already set their roots deep in the West.

With the foundation of academies for literary reform in Portugal in 1710, one was bound to see fresh approaches to the Indian quetion. The poets of the early part of the eighteenth century have given us some good picutres of the decline of the Portuguese power in the East. While Manoel Maria Barbosa du Bocage (1765-1805) tells us about the decadence of the Portuguese rule as he witnessed it during his three year stay in Goa, in his four "Sonetos", his peer, Father José Agostinho de Macedo gives us an account of the

Portuguese wars with the Maharatas, wars which hastened the decline, in his poem "O Oriente". Other accounts of the Portuguese fight for survival followed in prose by writers like Diego da Costa whose Account of the Wars in India from the years 1736 to 1740 was published in Lisbon in 1740. Six years later a similar work by Manoel Antonio de Meirelles appeared. But there were also scholars at work on the Indian languages and by the end of the century, Lisbon saw the publication of three grammars: one on the Marathi language published in 1805, the second one was on the Urdu language published the same year and the third one was on the Bengali language published soon after.

The nineteenth century was bound to bring in a noteworthy change in the literary field of Portugal for, evidently, the Romantic Movement, once started in Germany, did not take long to spread all over Europe. We can trace its influence even on the Indo-Portuguese literary relations. Since there were no more Portuguese glories to be sung, the writers of the Romantic School had no interest in declining colonial enterprises. However, the scholars did not let their activities be impeded by the romantic wave. While in Portuguese India a literary school was founded, at home Sanskrit studies continued to be pursued with renewed interest; a professorship of Sanskrit was founded and the first appointment went to the well-known orientalist of the time, Vasconcellos d'Abreu (1842-1906) whose works on the Sanskrit language and literature are of importance to present day scholars. Equally remarkable are the achievements of yet another dedicated indologist, Joaquim Heliodoro da Cunha Rivara who lived in Goa for twenty-two years. His historical, literary and philological studies are still useful documents. Commenting on Rivara and his dedicated spirit, J. A. Ismael Gracias, a historian of note, says:

> About Cunha Rivara, it is impossible to write without a feeling of reverence; he is the most learned European amongst these who have been here in the nineteenth century. An erudite antiquarian who spent the greater part of his day shut up in the Libraries and Archives, a humanist and paleographist, he left a large number of contributions for Luso-oriental history and also guided with a firm and benevolent hand the young minds that developed under his paternal direction, exercising an efficacious and salutary influence on the mental and literary evolution of Goa...with equal facility he wrote in Portuguese, Latin, French and English. He tried with great assiduity to revive Konkani, having been the first to compose a historical essay and to have some ancient didactic works in that language printed.[7]

It is only fair then, to assume that such an important orientalist represents, in a fitting way, a new breed of researchers. He was, so to speak, the precursor of modern orientalists.

Working with equal zeal, Filipe Nery Xavier did some important work on Portuguese India and in the same field, Eduardo de Balsemão did as much. It is in this very category of researchers that we come across the name of Ismael Gracias whose works on the archaeology and history of India contributed to the continuation of serious investigations at the Archives of Goa.

The beginning of the twentieth century also saw the publication of studies on the Indian dialects but Sanskrit received more attention from scholars. Monsenhor Sebastiao Rodolpho Dalgado, Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Lisbon, published a Portuguese version of the famous Indian tale of Nala and Damayanti in 1916 and four years later, his Rudiments of the Sanskrit Language was published. In this very period, Paulino Dias, a poet, founded the Rivista da India in which part of his prose version of The Bhagavad Gita was published. His verses on Indian themes were published in the periodical Luz de Oriente. Among these, were "Hymno de Gajendra a Vishnu", "Coro a Narayana", part of his poem "Indra" and "Vishnulal". His poem "The Cobra and the Toad" shows how adroitly he could handle Indian subjects without missing the sensitiveness to nature so true of Indian literature in general.

Of equal taste and calibre, was the poet Nascimento Mendonça. Of his poems the one that should be mentioned here is "A Morta" in which he deals with the episode of the great Indian epic, The Ramayana, where Rama, the hero, is lamenting over the loss of his beloved wife, Sita. His colorful imagery and vivid description of the reactions of Rama bear witness to his ability to treat an Indian subject in a masterly way. The very prologue to this poem suffices to arrest the attention of the reader:

> The scene is laid in the wonderful park of the palace of Ayodhia and it is the glorious and tragic hour of sunset. Rama, the invincible hero of Lanka, claps his hands with a sorrowful gesture and adores the divine sun which is dying. Beautiful in the purple light seems the garden of Ayodhia surrounded by a high wall of the finest marble of Jaipur...'

It is in this colourful setting that Mendonça makes his Rama lament thus:

> O immortal Souls, listen...have pity!
> I never was a tiger, a blood-thirsty lion,
> I loved beauty I adored goodness,
> My destruction has been my bitter and tumultuous pride.
> I was the child of the jungle, impetuous and heroic,
> Who loved the Sun, the Moon and infinite Beauty,
> My body was strong and my heart was stoic
> And in my blood surged a cursed lava.
> ....
> And thou wert in Lanka, the delicate being as pure
> As a ray of light of the divine Sun
> In the tormenting darkness and in the mire.
> But my heart was like a raging sea,
> My violent heart turned to stone, God!
> I never more loved, I am the steel of the armour
> On the breast already dead, of a defeated giant
> Who is broken down with the pain of unhappy remembrance.
> And thou wert, Sita Bai, my inviolate love,
> In my bitter summer the shadow of a palm-tree,
> In the sandy desert of life, my golden dream
> Only thou Sita, wert the wife of my soul!'

Such verses cannot fail to make a pleasant impression on the mind of anyone familiar with the Rama story. Equally successful was his prose work on a Hindu who retires into the jungle to seek the ancient Gods after being disillusioned by modern ways of life.

Adolpho Costa, like Mendonça has composed various poems on Indian subjects. His skill in handling these subjects is evident in his book Eurynas, published in the 1930's. His zeal went further; he assisted Paulino Dias in founding the

"Rivista da India", which, unfortunately, had too short a life.

In recent years, more works of historical value have been published. Of these, it would be appropriate to mention here the new edition of Archivo Portuquez Oriental, O Oriente Portuquezand Boletin do Instituto Vasco da Gama. Then we have Dr. A.M. da Cunha's ethnographical work, A India Antiga e Moderna. These and the great number of other documents form a reliable resource which promises a bright future for Portuguese Indian studies. The pioneers have laid a foundation solid enough for the continuation of Indo-Portuguese literary activities and while doing this they have brought Europe a step closer to the reality of India by dispelling some of the fantasy and errors of the past. Also, the Portuguese contribution to Indian studies is a good proof that Western orientalism had started a long time before the foundation of the Asiatick Society of Bengal by Sir. William Jones.

English Contribution

> But England lags behind and, afraid of new ideas, buries its head in dogmatic theology or linguistics. It is comparable to the situation of Sanskrit only a few years ago, when there were only four teachers of Sanskrit in this country, after nearly two hundred years of our Indian empire, while Germany had twenty. Sanskrit is much better represented here now, but in this language as in other oriental studies, the texts are studied for grammatical interest mainly, and although they are nearly all religious texts from the classics of the East the contents are not taught for their religious value.[18]

Nothing could be closer to the plain truth concerning English orientalism than the above statement by Parrinder. It is interesting to note that in this statement we can find echoes of Romain Rolland's own feelings regarding Western orientalism in general. It is precisely because he felt that the purely scholarly approach to Indian studies was not doing justice to the spiritual aspect of Vedic literature that he decided to enlighten the general public in the West on the spiritual message of Indian thought through his writings on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. As we shall see later, Germany has been more progressive in its approach to Indian studies and leads the way in Europe. But one must not overlook the fact that English orientalists had to fight their way thrugh the fierce antagonism of the anglicists. Early British administrators had practically no interest in Indian society and culture. Had it not been for the presence of a few intelligent and dedicated civil servants, English Indian studies would have lagged shamefully behind. The achievements of those few orientalists are the more praiseworthy as the fight was not an easy one to win. In other words, the Anglicist camp which included men like General Bentinck, Alexand Duff, a Scottish missionary and reformer, Charles Edward Trevelyan, Assistant Secretary, Thomas B. Macaulay and W. Wilberforce, an evangelical spokesman, were too powerful as adversaries of the orientalist camp whose pillars were Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General in India (1773-1784), Charles Wilkins (1749-1836), Sir William Jones (1746-1794), Henry T. Colebrooke (1765-1837) and Horace H. Wilson (1789-1860). The two camps were undaunted in their fight. While Trevelyan and his supporters fought hard to wipe out oriental studies in the cause of the advancement of Western education in India, the orientalists met the challenge with renewed vigour and their final victory could be foreseen with the advent of Horace H. Wilson on the battlefield.

While dealing with the Portuguese contribution to Indian studies, we pointed out that Western orientalism started a long time before the foundation of the Asiatick Society of Bengal. However, we cannot deny the fact that English orientalism played a major role in discovering intellectual India and exposing it to the West. If, by 1797, scholars in Europe could study the philosophy, the religion, the literature and even the law of India through translations of direct Sanskrit sources, it was mainly due to the service rendered by a few dedicated English civil servants. Twenty years before the founding of the Asiatick

Society, the orientalist camp found a great support in Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General. It was Hastings who, in 1764, suggested that oriental languages and literatures be included in the classical studies programme of Oxford University. But that dream of his, as far as India is concerned, had to wait almost seventy years to fully materialize in the endowment of the first Sanskrit chair at Oxford. However, Hastings did not wait for that day to come; he did his level best to help the English scholars at work by encouraging the pundits to share their knowledge with the researchers. Under his patronage and the direction of Nathaniel Halhed, _A Code of Gentoo Laws, or Ordinations of the Pundits_ (London, 1776) saw the light. This work was a translation into English of the Persian version of Hindu laws.

The initiative taken by Hastings would seem less surprising if we take into account the fact that he was one of the very few intellectuals who were aware of how distorted the image of India was in Europe. Besides, he did not hide his feelings in this regard:

> It is not very long since the inhabitants of India were considered by many, as creatures scarcely elevated above the degree of savage life, nor, I fear, is that prejudice yet wholly eradicated though surely abated.''

His hopes for better days for orientalism are best expressed in his intimate thoughts on Indian literature. He firmly believed that it "...will survive when British domination in India shall have long ceased to exist and wealth and power are lost to remembrance."[12] Once again, we may safely say that Hastings' hopes for Indian literature were not in vain. Needless to say that his cosmopolitan outlook and zeal for the advancement of knowledge won him the admiration and gratitude of all the members of the Asiatick Society. They saw in the Governor-General a man who paved the way for the progress of English orientalism. Evidently they were right. Wilkins, in particular, left no stone unturned in showing his gratitude to the great patron.

Wilkins' contribution to oriental studies did not start with his appointment as civil servant of the East India Company in 1770. Before he went to India, he already had a sound knowledge of oriental languages, of Persian and of Bengali in particular. Once in the land of Sanskrit literature, he naturally tried his hand at the Sanskrit language also. With encouragement from men like Hastings and Halhed, he made remarkable progress in a relatively short time. But it was not for personal satisfaction, as we may well be led to believe, that he made that special effort; it was for better purposes. In 1785 his translation of the Bhagavad Gita into English was published. His choice of this pearl of Sanskrit literature was indeed a wise one and his first attempt was not only fruitful but it also amounted to an outstanding feat in orientalism. Soon after its publication, Wilkins' translation captured Europe's attention and for the first time Westerners were able to discover the authentic religious and cosmological ideas of the Indians. To Wilkins himself the Gita was a masterpiece. Hastings did not think it was less:

> I hesitate not to pronounce the Geeta a performance of great originality, of a sublimity of conception, reasoning, and diction, almost unequalled, and a single exception, among all the known religions of mankind, of a theology accurately corresponding with that of the Christian dispensation, and most powerfully illustrating its fundamental doctrines.[13]

Goverdhan Caul of the Asiatick Society was no less enthusiastic and emphatic in his endorsement of Hastings' judgement:

> If Europeans wish to form a correct idea of Indian religion and literature, let them begin with forgetting all that has been written on the subject, by ancients and moderns, before the publication of the Gita.[14]

Besides translating the Gita, Wilkins rendered into English several animal fables and the well-known maxims Hitopodesa or Fables of Vishnoo Sarma.

Yet another example of Wilkins' mastery of Sanskrit is displayed in his Sanskrit grammar published in 1808. In the introduction to this work, he fully explains the advantages that one can derive from learning Sanskrit. We can hardly find fault with his views when he states that a good knowledge of Sanskrit not only opens the door to the religious, philosophical, scientific and literary writings but also helps one to learn the various Indian languages.

The privilege to have such a man as Wilson as Sanskrit teacher went to Sir William Jones, destined to be the father of British orientalism. Referring to the arrival of this great orientalist to the school of British orientalists,

Professor A.J. Arberry writes:

> No sound philology of the languages of India could be constructed until Sanskrit, the parent of a vast progeny, had been seriously and scientifically studied. Three-quarters of the eighteenth century had already passed when there occurred one of those strange and unaccountable phenomena known to all sciences and every art - the unpredictable appearance of a genius and the grouping about him of a school. The name of this genius was Sir William Jones, a man universally recognized as one of the greatest linguists ever born.'[3]

Artistic and sensitive by nature, Jones was at once attracted by Kalidasa's Shakuntala. No sooner had he published his translation of this play in 1789, than romanticists in Europe were pleasantly taken by surprise. One of them, is no less a figure than the great Goethe himself. According to him, everything that one can say about the play is contained in the word "Shakuntala". Romain Rolland was also fascinated by what Saint-Victor had said about the play in his Les Deux Masques though he was but seventeen when he was reading this work on drama. Needless to say that it was mainly due to Jones' translation that Kalidasa's play rapidly took its place among the world's great classics.

It is generally agreed that the greatest service done to Western orientalism by Jones was the foundation of the Asiatick Society of Bengal in 1784 for the specific purposes of inquiring into the "History, civil and natural, the Antiquities, Arts, Sciences and Literature of Asia." Jones offered the presidency of the Society to Hastings who then politely expressed his desire to "...resign...to the gentleman, whose genius had planned the institution, and was most capable of conducting it, to the attainment of the great and splendid purposes of its formation."[14] Therefore, Jones presided over the meetings of the Society at a time when his duties as Puisne Judge were already quite demanding. But that was not all. Besides the office of the president, he saw to it that his new institution's journal, *The Asiatick Researches or Transactions of the Society Instituted in Bengal, for Inquiring into History and Antiquities, the Arts and Sciences, and Literature of Asia*, was of respectable standard and well documented. He was himself its most faithful contributor. During the first five years, his contribution to the Society amounted to eleven Anniversary Discourses. These would have been spotless documents if the great scholar had given himself the task of avoiding errors made by his predecessors. The errors put aside, the Discourses reveal the zeal and scholarship of a great researcher. His excellent translations, his treatises and his overall patronage of oriental studies in all their aspects have often encouraged critics to call him "The father of Indology". Whether he deserves this honour or not is debatable but what is unquestionable is, evidently, the contribution made by his Society to Indology. Many are the scholars who recognize in his foundation of the Society an inestimable achievement. One of them, Professor A.J. Arberry, writes:

> But the most important event of the eighteenth century, from the orientalist standpoint, was the foundation in 1784 of the Asiatick Society of Bengal...This was an event of capital importance, for here we find the first beginnings of a scientific movement which was destined to spread to all parts of the world.[7]

Indian scholars, in particular, are naturally commendatory when writing about the Society and its founder: they unanimously appreciate Jones's contribution to the growth of Indology:

> We cannot judge Jones's contribution to the development of Indology by adding up various isolated 'discoveries' supposed to have been made by him... His real contribution to Indology lies in the foundation of the Asiatick Society which eventually unveiled India to the intellectual world, with the active help of the Indians, especially since 1829 when they were allowed to join as full members of the Society. He presented his theories about Indian civilization in a dramatic way which infectiously spread the romantic fascination of India and her culture throughout Europe. He and his Society evolved a methodology for the study of Indian history. His publication of Sakuntala and the Gita Govinda put Indian literature on the world map. After this no one could deny its merits.[8]

Such was the direct, positive and enduring contribution of Sir William Jones. But there is another aspect of his contribution which should not be overlooked. True scholars do leave behind, besides their achievements, something that is equally lasting and that thing is their attitude towards mankind. Again we have to bow in admiration of Jones and Prof. S.N. Mukerjee does this in a fitting way when he writes:

> Jones left behind him an attitude of mind, a profound reverence for men irrespective of their race and their different cultural backgrounds. This attitude is valid for all time, and Jones's support of it was an inspiration to many men of later

generations who had dealings with India.''

Henry T. Colebrooke who went to India to serve as Secretary for the Civil Service in 1783 became Professor of Sanskrit and Hindu law eighteen years later. Having a natural inclination for sciences, he became interested in Indian algebra and astronomy. But his Indian studies were not restricted to these subjects; religion and philosophy also attracted his attention. His essays, "On the Vedas, or Sacred Writings of the Hindus", "On the Religious Ceremonies of the Hindus and of the Brahmans especially" and "On the Philosophy of the Hindus" besides revealing his zeal for research and erudition are considered valuable documents. His inclination for sciences gave a remarkable degree of accuracy to his writings - a quality not so common in Jones' writings. French scholars, in particular, were much indebted to most of Colebrooke's writings on Indian religion and philosophy.

Another scholar with a scientific background who became a fine Sanskritist is Horace H. Wilson. His name is for ever associated with the first English-Sanskrit dictionary which he published in 1819. His Ariana Antiqua gave the West its first knowledge of Indian archeology and numismatics. Like Colebrooke, his predecessor, he was also interested in religion and wrote an "Essay on the Religious Sects of the Hindoos". His work on Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus, Translated from the original Sanskrit (1827) was quite popular with orientalists in Europe. French scholars were indebted to him. His devotion and the seriousness of his investigations bore fruit in 1833 when he was offered the first chair of Sanskrit at Oxford. Of Wilson's teaching at Oxford, we can see a reflection of its effectiveness in the achievements of his students. Who, among those interested in orientalism, would not have heard the name of Sir Monier Williams, author of a Sanskrit dictionary, books on Buddhism and Hinduism and, of course, a translation of Shakuntala? Monier Williams studied under Professor Wilson and was the man chosen to step into the shoes of his master as Boden Professor of Sanskrit.

The foundation of a Sanskrit chair at Oxford marked a turning point in the history of English Indology. Henceforth, we find two bodies of orientalists at work - the traditional one in India which continued to draw its scholars from among the civil servants and the other, in England working through universities. First it was Oxford, then Cambridge and London; Edinburgh and Manchester followed suit. In each of these institutions, a chair for the teaching of oriental languages and antiquities was founded. In many ways this second centre of Indian studies was an extension of the Asiatick Society of Bengal. In India too, there was expansion; in 1819, the Literary Society was founded in Bombay and its transactions produced valuable contributions to science. Then came the foundation of the Bombay branch of the Asiatick Society in 1841. Its journal produced literary articles of a high standard. Other local societies were founded and they, too, published useful periodicals. The Indian Government did not wait and watch; it finally decided to officially contribute to scientific studies and the products - excellent publications - were distributed among specialists of the world. Thanks to the famous archeologist, General Cunningham, the antiquities of Northern India were revealed with the publication of the Archeological Survey since 1861. Eleven years later, another archeologist, James Burgess, brought out yet another periodical dealing with various aspects of Indology. His Indian Antiquary published the writings of the prominent scholars of the time. Linguistic Survey was the fruit of the remarkable efforts of George Grierson, another dedicated scholar whose survey on the spoken languages of India of the time proved to be an extremely important contribution to linguistic studies. It was in that period of governmental literary and scientific activities that Epigraphia Indica saw the light. This publication helped reconstruct India's ancient history with its epigraphic documents.

It was an immense advantage for the universities with a Sanskrit chair to have as their early professors men like Colwell or Monier Williams, that is to say, men who were either teaching in India or who were in touch with India and her people through repeated visits.

The post-war situation of Indian studies in Britain, is summed up by the London School of Oriental and African Studies thus:

> Ever since the war the advanced study of India and her people has grown steadily in Britain. The main centre in both teaching and research is the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. The School's aim is to cover all the major fields of study, and to build up its already large library. The School's provision in the fields of language, literature, philosophy, religion, history, archaeology, law, anthropology and musicology is already well known, and recently new fields have been opened in the study of economics, politics, sociology and geography. Other universities, in particular Oxford and Cambridge, have maintained their long-standing interest. Universities and institutions, such as the Royal Institute of International Affairs and the Overseas Development Institute, which specialise in Commonwealth studies also naturally take a keen interest in India.[20]

French Contribution

French Indology can be traced as far back as the end of the seventeenth century when a few broadminded missionaries decided to follow the good example set by the Italian Jesuit, Roberto di Nobili whose endeavour to study the Indian languages and to learn about the local people is well-known. The interest in oriental documents kept increasing at the Bibliothèque du Roi in Paris. The Chinese documents came first, as the library had a Chinese librarian in the person of Arcade Hoang. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, there was more concrete progress. Under the new king's librarian, Father Bignon, the formation of a nucleus of works for the study of Far-Eastern and Indian languages and literature, was set up. Father Bignon himself had a collection of Chinese and Indian documents which he donated to the Bibliothèque when he became royal librarian. Furthermore, he asked Etienne Fourmont, a professor at the

Collège Royal to prepare a list of Chinese, Indian, Tartarian and Siamese works to be bought for the Bibliothèque. That list was then sent to the missionaries working overseas. For some reason or other, several missionaries did not respond to the request of Father Bignon. However, three Jesuits did care to do their best to satisfy the needs of the Bibliothèque. They were Fathers Le Gac, Calmette and Pons who belonged to the Catholic group of scholars at work on Indian literature; the other group was the Lutheran one. Father Pons who was in Chandernagar where he studied Sanskrit was the first to send to Paris a rich collection of Sanskrit texts. Fathers Calmette and Le Gac who were in the Madras area sent home the most precious texts namely, the Vedas. After the arrival of all these documents in Paris, a catalogue of "Codices orientales" was prepared according to instructions given by Father Pons and his fellow researchers and published in 1793. It was thus that a reliable Sanskrit philology was founded in Europe. Next came Indian history. It was the contribution of Joseph de Guignes. With the help of Maridas Pillai, a distinguished Tamil scholar, who had a sound knowledge of French, and data gathered from Greek, Latin, Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Chinese historical studies, de Guignes succeeded in writing a new history. His new approach in historical research proved to be quite effective considering the results. As early as 1753, he was lecturing on Indian doctrines at the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres. Three years later he published the first account on Chinese Buddhism in his *Histoire générale des Huns*. His interest in Buddhism was so keen that in less than a year afterwards his *Recherches historiques sur la Religion indienne et sur les Livres fondamentaux de cette Religion qui ont été traduits en chinois* gave to Europe a detailed account of how Buddhism spread from India to other parts of Asia.

It is during this period of historical studies that Anquetil-Duperron, a civil servant in the Compagnie des Indes, spent eight years in India (1754-1762) and did some research work in Zoroastrianism. Thirteen years after his return to France, he received a Persian version of the *Upanishads* and it was twenty-six years later that he published his Latin version of this work. Let it be noted that it was his *Oupnekhat, id est secretum tegendum, opus ipsa in India rarissimum* that had a tremendous effect on Schopenhauer and through the latter on Western thought. Hence the importance of Anquetil-Duperron's contribution to Indian studies.

Obviously, French scholars were making good use of the documents sent by the missionaries. Soon after the fall of Napoleon and the restoration of the monarchy, the future of Indian studies was assured by a serious researcher who was at the same time an employee of the Bibliothèque Nationale. He was Antoine-Léonard de Chézy who, after secretly studying Indianism was rewarded with the first Sanskrit chair founded at the Collège de France in 1815, eighteen years before the

Oxford one. No wonder critics unanimously claim that England of all European countries lagged behind in Indian studies. The historical event for French Indology came on January 16, 1815 when de Chézy gave his first lecture on the Sanskrit language. His "Discours sur les avantages, la beauté, la richesse de la langue sanscrite et sur l'utilité et les agréments que l'on peut retirer de son étude" was, as expected, well received. But his best contribution to Indian studies was his translation of *Shakuntala* in 1830. By that time, there were greater scholars and when two years later he passed away, one of them was ready to take over. He was Eugène Burnouf "by whose labours a knowledge of the Zend language was first brought to Europe".[21] The greatness of his genius and his originality are evident in his writings such as *Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme Indien* (1844-1852) and *Bhâgavata Purâna ou Histoire poétique de Krichna* (1840-1847). Besides these, he published his *Observations grammaticales sur quelques passages de l'essai sur le Pali* in 1827. His studies on Persian scriptures resulted in the publication of his *Commentaire sur le Yança l'un des livres liturgiques des Perses* (1833-1845). This work, it is assumed, laid the foundation for Iranian philology in Europe. As a professor of Indology, Burnouf distinguished himself so well that many of his students (who came from all over Europe) made a name for themselves in Indianism. One of them, Ariel, went to Pondichéry. He is the translator of *Tirukkural*, a great classical work in Tamil literature. Probably the most brilliant of them all was the great Oxian professor, Friedrich Max Muller whose achievements will be dealt with later. Nothing would be more interesting to note here than what this bright student has said about his great master. Reminiscing about his days at the Collège de France, he writes:

> ...Burnouf's explanations were certainly delightful. He spoke freely and conversationally in his lectures, and one could almost assist at the elaboration of his thoughts. His audience was certainly small; there was nothing like Renou's eloquence and wit. But Burnouf had ever so many facts to communicate to us. He explained his own researches, he showed us new MSS. which he had received from India, in fact he did all he could to make us fellow workers. Often did he tell us to look up some passage in the Veda, to compare and copy the commentaries and to let him have the result of our researches at the next lecture. All this was very inspiring particularly as Burnouf, upon examining our work, was very generous in his approval, and quite ready, if we had failed, to point out to us new sources that should be examined.[22]

It is unfortunate indeed that after such a solid basis laid by Burnouf, Indian studies in France had to undergo a period of quasi slumber because those who succeeded the great master, such as Pavie and Foucaux, were not of his calibre. The situation would have deteriorated if the foundation of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes in 1868 had not saved it. This new institution which brought about a renaissance in French philology, was of inestimable help to French Indology. The teaching of Sanskrit was entrusted to Hauvette-Besnault who was soon assisted by Abel Bergaigne, destined to occupy an honourable place among the great indologists of Europe. It was Bergaigne whom the Sorbonne honoured when the time to meet new needs had come; and as a great teacher of comparative grammar, he triggered the revival of Indian studies. Soon he became the founder of the systematic study of the Vedas. His deep interest in the Rig-Veda produced new light on the meaning of that vedic text. This, he achieved by his original method of explaining the Vedas by themselves. In his Religion Védique (I, p. iv) he tells us about his new approach thus:

> MM Roth et Brassmann ne craignent pas pour simplifier le sens des hymnes, de compliquer souvent le vocabulaire. J'essaie au contraire de rétablir la simplicité dans le vocabulaire en admettant la complexité dans les idées.[23]

Like Burnouf, Bergaigne was a great professor and among his students was the well-known orientalist, Sylvain Lévi. In his inaugural lecture at the Sorbonne, the latter chose to talk about his beloved master and Indology. It would not be out of place to mention in this context a few words of such a student about his great master:

> Je manquerais à un devoir de piété presque filiale si mes premières paroles ne rappelaient pas le souvenir de mon maître bien-aimé, M. Bergaigne. Si je dois laisser de côté les titres glorieux du savant, j'ai droit plus que personne à proclamer les admirables qualités du professeur...Malgré l'importance de ses découvertes, qui ont transformé l'histoire des origines indo-européennes, il dédaignait les succès bruyants. Né avec un tempérament d'artiste et une âme de poète, il eut le courage d'imposer silence à ses goûts. Dans sa chaire comme dans ses ouvrages, il s'applique à traiter en philologue sévère la philologie sanscrite et la grammaire comparée.[24]

Of lesser fame than Bergaigne, were a group of researchers whose works deserve to be mentioned. They are

Langlois' translation of the Rig-Veda which was the first in Europe at that time and for long unique in France; then there was Loiseur Deslongchamps' edition of Amara-Kosha and his translation of The Laws of Manu; his Essai sur les Fables Indiennes et sur leur Introduction en Europe was also of literary value. A third scholar, Adolphe Regnier, tried to continue the Burnouf tradition with some success. His Etudes sur la grammaire védique and his Prâtisâkhya du Rig-Veda are said to be comparable to Max Muller's works on the same subjects.

From Paris, French Indology spread to a provincial university when a chair of Sanskrit was founded in the Faculté des Lettres of the University of Lyon. The honour to occupy that chair went to a scholar in Sanskrit rhetoric, Professor P. Regnaud.

From France, French Indology spread to the Far-East when, in 1898, the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient was founded in Saigon then transferred to Hanoi. Henceforth, India is seen from the West as well as from the East by French scholars. The French political domination of Indo-China was fortunately accompanied by scientific researches. It was mainly due to the patient endeavour of Captain Aymonier, a significant collection of Sanskrit writings was made in Cambodia and Campa. These works revealed to Europe the wonderful growth of Indian culture beyond the Ganges. Associated with this contribution to Indian studies are the names of Bergaigne and Barth; the latter was more interested in the religious aspects of orientalism. Referring to their interest in studies in the Indo-China area, Professor Jean Filliozat writes:

> Although at first purely a Vedic and Sanskrit scholar, Bergaigne, too, turned to Greater India and to the history of Indo-China. Sanskrit studies themselves were responsible for his turning to this field. Many inscriptions in very correct Sanskrit and frequently elaborated in kavya style were found in Cambodia and on the eastern coast of the former kingdom of Campa. Bergaigne, along with Barth, did the important work of deciphering, translating and publishing many of the epigraphs. He was soon able to restore, according to the data thus gathered, a part of the history of Campa.[28]

It is almost impossible, in the present survey, not to dwell on one of Bergaigne's students whom we have mentioned earlier - Professor Sylvain Lévi - who started his Indian studies at the Sorbonne exactly a century after Sir William Jones founded his Asiatick Society of Bengal. But fired by probably more zeal than the English scholar, he spent forty years of his life to assure French Indology a bright future. No modern scholar would deny him the great success of his achievements.

Lévi's approach to Indian studies was one worthy of his great master, Abel Bergaigne. With him there was no question of repeating the errors of other scholars as was the case with several British scholars. Lévi scrupulously relied on original documents. It mattered little whether these were Sanskrit or Pali, Tibetan or Koutchean, Tokharian or Chinese for he had managed to master these languages and he had travelled to the best places for his research work:

> In 1897 and 1898 he made tours of scientific research in India and Japan and from 1921 to 1923 he travelled in India, Indochina, Japan, Korea, Siberia and Russia.[26]

From 1885 to 1921, his writings on the various aspects of orientalism kept appearing in quick succession. Of these, the most valuable are those dealing with Indian history. His Le Népal (1905-1908) in three volumes, is an excellent testimony to his great talent for historical research. Among his other well-known works we find Dans l'Inde (1925); L'Inde et le Monde (1926); his thesis on the Indian theatre, Le Théâtre Indien (1890) and La Doctrine du Sacrifice dans les Brahmanas (1898). Lévi's admiration for Indian civilization was a deep one. In a special and highly documented article for the Grande Encyclopédie, he sums up this admiration thus:

> La multiplicité des manifestations du génie indien, en même temps que leur unité fondamentale, donnent à l'Inde le droit de figurer au premier rang dans l'histoire des peuples civilisés. Sa civilisation, spontanée et originale, se déroule sur une ligne continue de trente siècles au moins, sans interruption et sans déviation; sans cesse en contact avec des éléments étrangers qui menacent de l'étouffer, sa persévérence victorieuse les absorbe, les assimile et s'en enrichit. Comme elle a vu passer les Grecs, les Scythes, les Afghans, les Mogols, elle regarde avec indifférence les Anglais qui passent, assurée de poursuivre, sous les accidents de la surface, le cours normal de ses hautes destinées, et surtout fascinée par l'infini et par le néant qu'elle a sentis, compris et exprimés avec une netteté et une vigueur incomparables.[27]

The sum total of Lévi's research work amounts to an inestimable contribution to French Indology. Through his great service to the cause of organizing Indian studies on a scientific basis, he revealed himself as not only a scholar of note but also as a worthy disciple of the great masters of Indology.

The French School of Indologists had the great advantage of having in its ranks another distinguished figure of Lévi's calibre. He is Professor Louis Renou who passed away in 1966. As a friend and collaborator of Lévi, he, too, devoted some thirty years of his life in continuing the great French Vedic exegetical tradition while teaching Indian civilization in the Faculté des Lettres of Sorbonne and also at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. Even when, in 1954, he was sent to take charge of the Maison Franco-Japonaise in Japan, he took advantage of that opportunity to pursue his studies in Japanese Buddhism. He not only succeeded in revealing the Vedic origins of the various hymns and rites of Japanese Buddhism but also a great number of Sanskrit words that have slipped into the Japanese language itself.

To give a complete list of the great bulk of Renou's writings in the present survey would be almost impossible. But we can afford to mention some of the gems out of this bulk. In 1938 appeared his interesting Vedic study, *Hymnes et Prières du Véda*. Then followed his translations of the *Isha*, the *Katha* and the *Kena Upanishads* (1943); *Anthologie sanskrite* (1947); *Sanskrit et Culture* (1950); *Les Littératures de l'Inde* (1951); *L'Hindouisme* (1951) and his translation of *Hymnes spéculatifs du Véda* (1956). It is to be regretted that the great scholar did not finish his translation of the Rig-Veda. Out of the 1028 hymns he had managed to translate 613 before his untimely death. But his overall achievement in the field of Vedic studies won him not only a respectable place among the titans of Indology, but also a world-wide reputation.

French Indology did not receive a death blow after the passing away of such great scholars as Lévi and Renou for there were other dedicated and equally able savants to take over. The continuation of the great French tradition in orientalism has been assured by competent scholars like Jean Herbert and Jean Filliozat who have proved themselves already. Of Herbert's works we would mention his Introduction à l'Asie (1960), a work worthy of a great researcher, and his interesting essay on What the West can learn from the East (1949). Let it be noted that Herbert was a close friend of Romain Rolland and that the latter was very much interested in the scholar's Indian studies as well as in Mme. Herbert's research for her book on Sister Nivedita (Marguerite Noble), Vivekananda's close friend. The last time Herbert saw Romain Rolland was in 1941 and the news he brought to his friend was more than encouraging and it must have been with great joy that the latter noted the following in his diary:

> Mme. Herbert achève son livre sur Nivedita, qui embrasse et éclaire tout le grand mouvement de révolte Indien, après la mort de Vivekananda. Rôle qu'y a joué Okakura. Herbert a rassemblé la collection la plus complète des pensées de

> Ramakrishna, et il leur restitute leur verdeur native, que ses disciples voilent pudiquement.[28]

It was Herbert who introduced the first representative of the Ramakrishna Mission in France, Swami Siddheswarananda, to Romain Rolland early in 1938. Having travelled widely in India, Herbert was glad to report to his friend that after the publication of his works on Gandhi, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in India, France had become the country of Romain Rolland for Indians. It would be no mistake to assume that Romain Rolland's keen interest in Herbert's popularization of Indian thought in the West, is a good proof of his firm belief in the validity of that thought till the end of his days.

Professor Filliozat is mainly interested in Indian philology but his works show that he has done researches in other fields as well. As an employee of the Department of manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Nationale (1936-1941), he certainly had an excellent opportunity to start with his investigation in this field. His efforts had their first reward when, in 1952, he was appointed Professor at the famous Collège de France where he could share the fruit of his research work. From 1955 to 1977 he had a golden opportunity for the deepening of his knowledge of Indianism when he took over the directorship of the Institut Français d'Indologie of Pondicherry. Among his works mention should be made of: *L'Inde classique* (1947-1953); *La Doctrine Classique de la Médecine Indienne, ses Origines et ses Parallèles Grecs* (1949); *Inde, Nation et Traditions* (1961) and Les Philosophies de l'Inde (1970).

German Contribution

Long before German scholars started to learn Sanskrit in Europe or even before Georg Forster's Shakuntala was published (1791), Sanskrit studies had been done in India by German missionaries. The first grammar of the Sanskrit language was written in Latin by a Bavarian priest, Father Heinrich Roth, in 1660. However, this work was never printed. A second Sanskrit grammar was written by a German Jesuit named Ernst Hanxleden who spent some thirty-three years in India (1698-1732). This work, too, remained in manuscript form. But the Saxonian missionary, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbald, was more successful with his grammar of the Tamil language which was published in Halle in 1716. Equally successful was Father Joseph Tieffenthaler with his work on the history and geography of India, Historisch-geographische Beschriebung von Hindustan, published in 1785. It is a detailed study covering twenty-three districts of India and as such was naturally most welcome in Europe where the image of India was still distorted. Unlike the Portuguese missionaries, the German priests almost begged to go to India to work in the religious and cultural fields and by the middle of the nineteenth century, their success was evident. It would only be fair, then, to assert that the precursors of German Indology were such missionaries as mentioned above.

Unlike British orientalism, French and German Indian studies were fortunate indeed to be free of obstacles resulting from political considerations. It is most probably due to this fact in particular, that both the French and the Germans were ahead of the English in their pursuit of Indian studies. The German centre of Indological studies is the youngest but its age is of little importance when we consider the quality and bulk of its output.

The French School of Indologists is proud of the fact that German Indology started in Paris, the very birthplace of the French one. The work done by the British pioneers before the end of the eighteenth century had already created a great interest amidst German scholars and the desire to go to the original documents was fired. It was not by mere chance that Friedrich von Schlegel, the philologist, found himself studying Persian under A.L. de Chézy in Paris. Nor was it by chance that he found in Alexander Hamilton his Sanskrit teacher. It was Langlès, the curator of oriental documents at the Bibliothèque Nationale who introduced him to Hamilton, a British Naval officer, then a prisoner on parole in Paris. According to German critics, Hamilton was then the only man with a sound knowledge of Sanskrit in Europe. He learned the classical language in India and even taught it at Haileybury College. For both Schlegel and German Indology, then, the meeting with Hamilton in 1803 was a happy and memorable event. The pupil did not take a long time to master the new language and the tutor must have been proud of him when, in 1808, his book On the Language and Wisdom of Indians was published. By common consent, this publication is considered as the birth of German Indology. It is in this very publication that Schlegel made the following statement:

> ...even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans... appears in comparison with the light and vigour of oriental idealism, like a feeble promethean spark in the full flood of the heavenly glory of the noonday sun, faltering and feeble and ever ready to be extinguished.[29]

Referring to the contents of this work, Professor Ludwig Alsdorf, a German orientalist, writes:

> Besides a good deal of comparative philology, the book gave the first description of Indian religion and philosophy based on original sources, and an appendix contained the first German translations made directly from Sanskrit originals: passages from the Mahabharata, particularly the Bhagavadgita, from the Ramayana and Manusmrti.[30]

However, the founder of German Indology did not go further than this publication for some reason or other. Fortunately, his eldest brother, August Wilhelm von Schlegel, a student of de Chézy, had already become a Sanskritist and took over from Friedrich. While in Paris, Wilhelm had met the founder of comparative philology and linguistics, Franz Bopp. The latter was studying Persian and Arabic but found time to coach Wilhelm in Sanskrit. In 1818, A.W. von Schlegel was appointed Professor of Indology at the new University of Bonn. Henceforth, new professorships were founded at other German universities for the teaching of Sanskrit and comparative grammar. A.W. von Schlegel had no intention of giving up his interest in Indology as his brother did after such a bright beginning. On the contrary, he proved to be an active scholar. His treatise *On the Present Condition of Indian Philosophy* was published but within a year of his appointment as professor. The rigour and care with which Schlegel treated the Sanskrit language is quite evident in his critical edition of the *Bhagavadgita* (1823). Right from the beginning he stood for a complete independence from other Western centres for Indian studies:

> He streses the fact that considerations of political utility, important for the English, are entirely ouside the scope of the German; and claiming independence for a German Indology and predicting its future greatness and superiority, he proudly exclaims: 'Should the English claim a monopoly of Indian literature? That would be too late! Let them keep their cinnamon and cloves; these spiritual treasures are common property of the educated world.'[31]

This attitude was going to be that of future German Indologists. Little wonder, then, that the German School of Indologists willingly responded when British universities requested that oriental professors be sent on loan. Such literary figures as Rosen, Goldstucker, Roth, Eggeling, Aufrecht and last but not least, the great Max Muller himself, would suffice to convince any intellectual of the Germans' generosity in the sharing of their superior knowledge in Indian studies. Romain Rolland was very much aware of this fact. In 1928 he wrote an article on "Vivekananda et Paul Deussen" for the German periodical, *Schopenhauer Gesellschaft* and in it he mentioned

Vivekananda's impression of his German friends, Lassen, Deussen and Muller. The superiority of German scholarship was not a secret to Vivekananda. Referring to the pioneers of German Indology he writes:

> Heroic certainly they were, - what interest except their pure and unselfish love of knowledge could German scholars have had at that time in Indian literature.[32]

Franz Bopp's contribution to Indian studies was his discovery and edition in 1819 of the famous collection of Sanskrit poetry, the Nalopakhyana. Furthermore, it was Bopp who, in 1816, demonstrated that Sanskrit, Greek and Latin had a common source. This discovery was to revolutionize the course of philological studies in the West.

But works of much greater importance to Indology in general were yet to come from the German School of Indologists. Among the scholarly achievements of the early stage, was the famous voluminous Sanskrit dictionary, St. Petersburg Dictionary, compiled by Burnouf's pupil, R. Roth in collaboration with Otto Bothlingk, a Sanskrit scholar of note and member of the Imperial Russian Academy. It took them some twenty-three years (1852-1975) to complete this work. Before the publication of this dictionary, the only useful work along these lines in Europe was Wilson's Sanskrit-English Dictionary. The importance of the German dictionary was two-fold: first, it served as an example for modern dictionaries and second, it "has a special significance which is not immediately obvious. Roth's share in the work had consisted in the lexicographical treatment of the Veda; and his contribution to Vedic research was second in importance to none, not even to that first edition of the Rgveda that was to immortalize more than anything else the name of the great Max Muller."[33]

Before we come to the famous Indologist mentioned in the above quotation, we make bold to briefly dwell on the great German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer, though, for sure, he did not belong to the School of Sanskrit scholars. As a matter of fact, the philosopher never learned Sanskrit but the reason for mentioning him here lies in the other fact that he did understand Indian philosophy and religion and did share his knowledge of these with his German readers. The teachings of the Upanishads had made a deep impression upon him though their meaning reached him through the Latin translation of the Persian version done by Anquetil-Duperron. Referring to this impression, Professor Ludwig Alsdorf writes:

> This work became his Bible, and we have it from a friend of his that he actually used it as such before going to sleep. His words of praise are famous and oft-quoted: 'On every page we meet profound, original, sublime thoughts, while a high and holy earnest pervades the whole of it. Everything here breathes Indian air and original existence akin to nature. It is the most recompensing and most elevating reading that (except the original) is possible in this world. It has been the comfort of my life and will be the comfort of my death.[34]

Schopenhauer was equally deeply impressed by the Buddhist philosophy with which he identified his own thought.

Furthermore, he found it suitable to call himself a Buddhist.

> If I were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow - in some parts a very paradise on earth - I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant - I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, universal, in fact more truly human, a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life - again I should point to India.[15]

Praising India and its wisdom in such glowing terms, is no other than the famous German scholar, Professor Friedrich Max Muller (1823-1900), who occupied an enviable place among the orientalists of his time. It was the dream of becoming a great philosopher that led him into the vast field of Vedic studies. Reminiscing about the time when he decided to study a special subject he tells us that:

> For a time I thought of becoming a philosopher, and that sounded so grand that the idea of preparing for a mere school master, teaching Greek and Latin, seemed to me more and more too narrow a sphere. Soon, however, while dreaming of a chair of philosophy at a German University, I began to feel that I must know something special, something that no other philosopher knew, and that induced me to learn Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. I had only heard what we call in German the chiming, not the striking of the bells of Indian philosophy.[16]

For such an enthusiastic student, "the chiming" was certainly not enough. As a strong believer in the idea that there is a charm in the unknown, he chose to start by studying Sanskrit under the newly appointed Professor Brockhaus at Leipzig University.

After a good beginning with Professor Brockhaus, Max Muller spent a short time in Berlin and then went to Paris in March 1845 responding to an invitation of his old friend, Baron Hagedorn. He had already thought of going to either Paris or London to continue his Sanskrit studies. The Baron's invitation came at the right time and proved to be of great help to the student. Once in Paris, how could the latter resist the temptation of attending the lectures of the great Burnouf? His meeting with this famous scholar was extremely encouraging:

> He received me with great civility, such as I had not been accustomed to before. He spoke of some little books which I had published, and inquired warmly after my teachers in Germany, such as Brockhaus, Bopp and Lassen. He told me I might attend his lectures in the Collège de France, and he would always be most happy to give me advice and help.[37]

That was the opportunity Max Muller was waiting for and in the company of Berthelemy St. Hilaire, a personal friend of Burnouf, Abbé Bardelli, R. Roth, Th. Goldstucker and a few others, he attended the great master's lectures. The new student was quite impressed and found the lectures inspiring: "...I carefully attended his lectures, which were on the hymns of the Rig-Veda and opened an entirely new world to my mind."[38]

Thus began Max Muller's Vedic studies under Burnouf and it did not take long for the good results to show themselves. In June 1846 the student left Paris for England to get his edition of the Rig-Veda published at the Oxford University Press and to further his research work in London. Considering the short time he spent with Burnouf, who would not be tempted to say that his achievement was a feat in the true sense of the word? The supervision of the printing work compelled him to stay in Oxford and he soon fell in love with the "beautiful old town" and "academic paradise" where to his pleasant surprise, he was welcome:

> What impressed me, however, even more than the great hospitality of Oxford, was the real friendliness shown to an unknown German scholar...I must have seemed a very strange bird, such as had never before built his nest at Oxford.[31]

Most probably, he knew not then that he was destined to become not only a naturalized Englishman and an illustrious Oxonian (since 1848) but also deputy Taylorian Professor of Modern Languages in 1850, a honorary fellow of Christ Church, a fellow of All Souls, Professor of Comparative Philology in 1868, curator of the famous Bodleian Library and a delegate of the University Press. Had he been elected to the vacant Sanskrit chair in 1860, he would have had hardly any disappointment in his life at Oxford.

It was not an easy task for Max Muller to get his edition of the Rig-Veda published as the printing of such a voluminous work meant a considerable expense. Thanks to the strong recommendation of Humbolt he was able to enjoy the kindness of the Prussian Minister, Baron Bunsen. The latter and Professor H.H. Wilson, the librarian of the East India Company, were successful in convincing the Company to undertake the printing expenses and the first edition of Max Muller's first major work saw the light in 1849. After his appointment as Taylorian Professor of Modern Languages, the publication of other works followed. Among these were his History of Sanskrit Literature (1859) which was the fruit of his interest in mythology and comparative relgions. In 1875, he put an end to his teaching career to undertake the colossal task of editing the fifty-one volumes of The Sacred Books of the East, a task which he had the great satisfaction of completing before the end of his days. It is mainly for this very publication that the great scholar is known to-day. However, one should not forget his highly documented lectures, particularly the Gifford Lectures which he delivered between 1888 and 1892 and published in four volumes later. Furthermore, his writings on Indian philosophy are quite illuminative and are the best proofs of the maturity of erudition of his later years. Apart from his Vedic and philological studies which are no doubt monumental, he wrote about one of his contemporaries, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa who was in may ways, Vedanta in flesh and blood. His Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings (1898), probably the last of his writings on Indian subjects, proved to be an excellent work to crown his long and brilliant career in Indology. Romain Rolland, to whom the erudition of Max Muller was no secret, was very much indebted to this particular publication for his own work on Ramakrishna.

Max Muller's contribution to Vedic studies is inestimable and it came at a very auspicious time for Indology in general. In other words, it came at a time when, in India itself, a favourable wind was blowing at the sails of the Indological ship. Max Muller's works gave the new science the momentum which guaranteed its success. Earlier we have mentioned the fact that Schopenhauer used to call himself a Buddhist. Max Muller's admiration for the Vedic literature encouraged him to take delight in signing his name as "Moska - Mula" which, in Sanskrit, means "the root of salvation". After having studied and published the Veda he wrote in his autobiography:

> To the scholar, no doubt, the Veda remained and always will remain the oldest of real books, that has been preserved to us in an almost miraculous way. By book, however, as I often explained, I mean a book divided into chapters and verses, having a beginning and an end, and handed down to us in an alphabetic form of writing...But the Veda, with its ten books or madalas, its 1017 hymns or suktas, with every consonant and vowel and accent plainly written, was a different thing. It may safely be called a book.[48]

Like Voltaire, Michelet, Goethe, Schopenhauer, Romain Rolland and many other friends of India, he never could visit the land of the Vedas, a country he loved so much and for which he had rendered such an inestimable service. But if he had not seen the physical aspects of that land, he certainly had a very deep knowledge of the best that it can offer to the rest of the world, namely, its wisdom. Had he been to India, he would have certainly gone to Bengal to meet one of the "men who can pour out their souls in perfervid eloquence and high-flown poetry, or who are able to enter even on subtle discussions of the great problems of philosophy and answer any questions addressed to them."[41] - Ramakrishna. However, he was gratified when the eminent disciple of the latter, Vivekananda, came to pay him his homage at Oxford on May 28, 1896. It was when he was writing about this visit that Romain Rolland found a golden opportunity to pay his own homage to the great German scholar:

> Ce fut Ramakrishna qui le mit en rapport avec Max Muller. Le vieil indianiste, dont le jeune regard suivait, avec une curiosité toujours neuve et une généreuse sympathie, toutes les palpitations de l'âme religieuse hindoue, avait déjà perçu, à l'Orient, comme un des Rois Mages, le lever de l'étoile de Ramakrishna. Il était désireux d'interroger un témoin direct de la nouvelle Incarnation; et, à sa demande, Vivekananda dut rédiger ses souvenirs de son maître, que Max Muller utilisa dans un petit livre sur Ramakrishna. Vivekananda n'était pas moins attiré par le Mage d'Oxford, qui, de son lointain observatoire, avait annoncé le passage du grand cygne dans le ciel du Bengale. Il fut invité chez lui, le 28 mai 1896; et le jeune Swami de l'Inde, s'inclinant devant le vieux sage d'Europe, salua en lui un esprit de sa race, la réincarnation d'un antique Rishi, qui se souvient de ses premières naissances, aux jours anciens de l'Inde des Védas, - 'une âme qui, chaque jour, réalise son unité avec le Brahman...'[42]

According to Vivekananda himself, Max Muller was a Vedantist of Vedantists. Soon after his return to India, he wrote in his periodical, *The Brahmavadin*:

> I wish I had a hundredth part of that love for my own motherland!...He has lived and moved in the world of Indian thought for fifty years or more... (It has) coloured his whole being...He has caught the real soul of the melody of the Vedanta...The jeweller alone can understand the worth of jewels...[3]

Max Muller's great identification with Hinduism is, evidently, beyond any doubt. But what is perhaps less known is his great affection for the people of the land of the Vedas, an affection which reveals itself not only in his book. Auld Lang Syne: My Indian Friends(1899) but also in The Life and Letters of Professor Max Muller. It is regrettable that his great love and respect for India and its spiritual heritage was not well viewed in some quarters in Europe. He was accused of partiality and he did not fail to defend himself:

> I have often been told that I have been misled by these acquaintances, and have taken far too favourable a view of the Indian character; that I had seen the best of India only, not the worst. But where is the harm? I have seen what the Indian character can be, I have learnt what it ought to be, and I hope what it will be, and though we cannot expect a whole nation of Ram Mohan Roys, of Debendranath Tagores, or Keshub Chunder Sens, of Malabaris and Ramabais, we ought not to neglect them in our estimate of the capabilities of a whole nation.[4]

To Indian intellectuals, on the other hand, Max Muller is, above all, the symbol of the superiority of German Indology; secondly, he is their beloved "Moksa Mula". Professor Ludwig Alsdorf, of the University of Hamburg, writes in this connection:

> Indeed his feat was freely recognized by the leaders of Hindu opinion who assured him of their eternal gratitude for, as Raja Raddakanta Dev put it in 1855, the inestimable service rendered to the Hindus in giving them a correct and magnificent edition of their holy scriptures. What Debendranath Tagore, the poet's father, wrote to Max Muller in 1884 deserves also to be quoted: 'By editing the Rgveda and the Upanishads you have made accessible to European scholars the thoughts and aims of our old Rsis hidden hitherto in illegible mess. It is to be hoped that the seed of the knowledge of our old literature may strengthen the bonds between two nations which, grown up under one roof, later separated and are scattered over remote parts of the globe but are once to be reunited by providence.'[45]

Another due homage to Max Muller comes from the pen of one of his Indian friends, Protap Chunder Mozoomdar, the leader of the Brahmo Samaj and a close friend of Vivekananda. In his book, *The Life and Teaching of Keshub Chunder Sen*, he writes:

> As for Max Muller himself, his services to India are not to be measured only by the valuable literary tribute he has repeatedly paid to Hindu philosophy and faith but the personal affection and solicitude he has shown for every Hindu, for every Oriental he has met, are characteristic of the man.[46]

To this we may add that by realizing his dream of becoming a great Vedic scholar, Max Muller performed in the field of Indian studies, a feat of which orientalists are and will for ever be proud. His legacy is inestimable.

In the present survey, we have tried to give a sketch of the achievements of some of the early prominent scholars who, by dint of their contribution to Indian studies, have consciously or unconsciously, helped build a bridge between East and West. The great pioneers and the modern scholars have, evidently, changed the image of India in the West by dispelling the false or distorted notions engendered by the works of misinformed or prejudiced writers. Political considerations did naturally come in the way of Portuguese and English scholars but their contributions must not be overlooked. If the French and German Indologists were in a more favourable situation, we would not go as far as to assume that they totally eclipsed their Portuguese or English confrères. The contribution of each country, great or small, has to be recognized in any assessment of early Indian studies.

1 Pietro della Valle, *Viaggi*, trans. Edward Grey (Venice, 1681). Quoted by Ethel M. Pope, *India in Portuguese Literature* (Bastoria: Tipografia Rangel, 1937), p. 112.

2 Ethel M. Pope, op. cit., p. 112.

3 Ethel M. Pope, op. cit., p. 72.

4 Ethel M. Pope, op. cit., p. 83.

5 Ethel M. Pope, op. cit., p. 116.

6 Vincent Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul: 1542-1605* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1919), p. 7.

7 J.A. Ismael Gracias, in M.J. Gabriel de Saldanha, *Historia de Goa*, I, 7. Quoted by Ethel M. Pope, op. cit., pp. 202-203.

8 Ethel M. Pope, op. cit., p. 267.

9 Ethel M. Pope, op. cit., pp. 270-272.

10 Geoffrey Parrinder, *Comparative Religion* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1962), p. 16.

11 Warren Hastings, in Charles Wilkins' *The Bhagavat-Geeta, or Dialogues of Kreeshna and Arjoona; in eighteen lectures; with notes; translated from the Original, in the Sanskreet, or ancient language of the Brahmans* (London: Gainesville: Scholars' Facsmiles and Reprints, 1959), p. 13.

12 Ibid., p. 13.

13 Ibid., p. 10.

14 Goverdhan Caul, "On the Literature of the Hindus, from the Sanskrit," *Asiatick Researches: or, Transactions of the Society Instituted in Bengal, for Inquiring into the History and Antiquities, the Arts and Sciences, and Literature of Asia*, I, (1901).

15 A.J. Arberry, *British Orientalists* (London: William Collins, 1943), p. 29.

16 John Shore, Baron Teignmouth, *Memoirs of the Life, Writings and Correspondence of Sir William Jones* (London: J. Hatchard, 1804), pp. 235-237.

17 A.J. Arberry, op. cit., p. 16.

18 S.N. Mukherjee, *Sir William Jones: A study in Eighteenth Century British Attitudes to India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 121.

19 Ibid., p. 141.

20 London School of Oriental and African Studies, "Indian Studies in Britain", in Indian Studies Abroad (London: Asia Publishing House, 1964), p. 1.

21 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Volume 4, 1972 ed. (London: William Benton, 1972), pp. 453-454.

22 Friedrich Max Muller, My Autobiography (Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 'P', Ltd., 1976), p. 86.

23 Abel Bergaigne, Religion Védique, Tome I (Paris: Vieweg, 1883), p. iv.

> "Messrs Roth and Grassmann are not afraid of simplifying the meaning of the hymns, of often complicating the vocabulary. On the contrary, I try to restore simplicity to the vocabulary by admitting complexity in the ideas."

24 Sylvain Lévi, "Abel Bergaigne et l'Indianisme", Revue Bleue, XLV, ler Mars 1890.

> "I would fail in an almost filial devotion if my first words did not recall the memory of my beloved master, Mr. Bergaigne. If I am to put aside the glorious titles of the scholar, I have the right more than anybody to proclaim the admirable qualities of the professor... In spite of the importance of his discoveries, which have transformed the history of the Indo-European origins, he hated resounding successes. Born with the temperament of an artist and the soul of a poet, he had the courage to make his tastes keep silent. In his chair as well as in his works, he applies himself to deal with sanskrit philology and comparative grammar as a strict philologist."

25 Jean Filliozat, "Indian Studies in France", in Indian Studies Abroad, pp. 6-17.

26 Encyclopaedia Britannica, Volume 13, 1972 ed. (London: William Benton, 1972), p. 1002.

27 Sylvain Lévi, "Inde" in La Grande Encyclopédie, Tome Vingtième (Paris: H. Lamirault et Cie, 1895), p. 710.

> "The multiplicity of the manifestations of the Indian genius as well as their fundamental unity give India the right to figure on the first rank in the history of civilized nations. Her civilization, spontaneous and original, unrolls itself in a continuous time across at least thirty centuries, without interruption, without deviation; ceaselessly

> in contact with foreign elements which threatened to choke her, her victorious perseverance absorbed them, assimilated them while enriching herself with them. As she had seen the Greeks, the Scythians, the Afghans, the Moguls pass by, she is now watching the English go by with indifference, being confident to pursue under the accidents of the surface, the normal course of her high destiny, and being above all fascinated by the infinite and nothingness which she has felt, understood and expressed with incomparable clearness and vigour."

28 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, (Bale: Editions Vineta, 1951), p. 413.

> "Mrs. Herbert is completing her book on Nivedita, which takes up and throws light on the whole great Indian revolt movement, after the death of Vivekananda. The role which Okakura plays in it. Herbert has brought together the most complete collection of Ramakrishna's thoughts, and he is giving them back their native vitality, which his disciples modestly veil."

29 Friedrich Schlegel, On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians in The Aesthetic and Miscellaneous Works of Friedrich von Schlegel (London: George Bell and Sons, 1900), p. 520.

30 Ludwig Alsdorf, "Indian Studies in Germany", in Indian Studies Abroad, pp. 18-35.

31 Ludwig Alsdorf, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

32 Swami Vivekananda, "Lassen, Deussen and Max Muller", Brahmavadin, June 6, 1896.

33 Ludwig Alsdorf, op. cit., p. 24.

34 Ludwig Alsdorf, op. cit., p. 22.

35 Friedrich Max Muller, India: What can it Teach us? (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1899), p. 6.

36 Friedrich Max Muller, My Autobiography, p. 73.

37 Friedrich Max MUller, op. cit., p. 85.

38 Friedrich Max Muller, op. cit., p. 86.

39 Friedrich Max Muller, op. cit., p. 120.

40 Friedrich Max Muller, op. cit., p. 103.

41 Friedrich Max Muller, *Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1910), p. 10.

42 Romain Rolland, *La Vie de Vivekananda et l'Evangile Universel*, (Paris: Editions Stock, 1930), p. 85.
The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel, trans. E.F. Malcolm-Smith (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1970), p. 91.

> "It was Ramakrishna who brought him into contact with Max Muller. The old Indianist whose young regard followed with ever fresh curiosity all the palpitations of the Hindu religious soul, had already perceived, like the Magi of old, in the East the rising star of Ramakrishna. He was eager to question a direct witness of the new Incarnation; and it was at his request that Vivekananda indited his memories of the Master, afterwards used by Max Muller in his little book on Ramakrishna. Vivekananda was no less attracted by the Mage of Oxford, who, from his distant observatory had announced the passage of the great swan through the Bengal sky. He was invited to his house on May 28, 1896; and the young Swami of India bowed before the old sage of Europe and hailed him as a spirit of his race, the reincarnation of an ancient Rishi, recalling his first birth in the ancient days of Vedic India - 'a soul that is every day realising its oneness with Brahman...'"

43 Swami Vivekananda, "Lassen, Deussen and Max Muller", *Brahmavadin*, June 6, 1896.

44 Friedrich Max Muller, *Auld Lang Syne: My Indian Friends*, (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1899), p. 5-6.

45 Ludwig Alsdorf, "Indian Studies in German", in *Indian Studies Abroad*, p. 25.

46 Protap Chunder Mozzomdar, *The Life and Teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen*, (Calcutta: Mahabidhan Trust, 1934), p. 151.

"Now, I am a Frenchman of France born in the heart of France in a family which has been nurtured on her soil for centuries. And when I was barely twenty I had no knowledge of the religions and philosophies of India. I had not even read the rare philosophers like Schopenhauer who had contacted them. I believe therefore that there is some direct family affinity between an Aryan of the Occident and an Aryan of the Orient. And I am convinced, Friend Roy, that I had descended down the slopes of the Himalayas along with those victorious Aryans. I have their blue blood flowing in my veins."

Romain Rolland, letter to Dilip Kumar Roy, October 1, 1924, in Dilip Kumar Roy, Among the Great, (Bombay: Vora and Co., Publishers Ltd.,1945), p. 62.

CHAPTER II

ROMAIN ROLLAND DISCOVERS INDIA: THE STORY OF HIS CONTACTS

Romain Rolland's Disenchantment With Europe: Church and Nation

Before dealing with Romain Rolland's contribution to Indian studies, we deem it necessary to trace back the factors that encouraged this great pacifist who

> "...toujours affirma sa fraternité avec l'Allemand, l'Anglais, avec tout l'univers, fut, depuis des siècles, implanté par sa race au coeur de la province la plus centrale de France."[1]

to look to Asia for a regeneration of the human soul.

It would be wrong to assume (as some critics tend to) that it was the First World War and its disastrous effects that made Romain Rolland change his mind about the moral power of the materialistic West. The War only reinforced his already firm belief in the "insufficiencies and limited arrogance"[2] of the materialistic philosophy of the West. The genesis of his interest, in Asia in general and in India in particular, is to be traced back to the days of his disillusionment with the inefficiency of the moral values of the West. Long before the War came, he had already formed his opinion about the destiny of Europe and in 1909 he revealed it in his magnum opus, Jean-Christophe, using Olivier as his spokesman: "L'Occident se brûle...Bientôt...Bientôt...Je vois d'autres lumières qui se lèvent au fond de l'Orient."[3] When the catastrophe had destroyed all, he was cruelly diappointed for, through his hero, Jean-Christophe, he had voiced his bitter feelings against the decline of Europe which he naturally lamented:

> Déclin d'Europe, contre lequel l'energie de Christophe, en un dernier sursaut, réagit sous la vue de cristal sans défaut d'Olivier désabusé. Avec Christophe, j'ai lutté contre le destin que je voyais venir. Et j'ai appelé à la lutte les jeunes générations. L'Espoir a persisté jusqu'à l'année funèbre qui scelle la destinée d'Occident: 1914. L'année de la mêlée, qui faucha mes jeunes frères, mes fils spirituels, l'Europe en fleur.[4]

What was most unbearable to the author of Jean-Christophe, was the attitude of the Church during the war. While the killings and destructions were going on, the Church, for political reasons, offered no opposition nor did either the Catholic or the Protestant leaders raise a voice against the unbridled slaughter. No one was more fully aware of this situation than Romain Rolland:

> ...à une réunion des pasteurs méthodistes de New York, l'un d'eux, le pasteur de Bridgeport ayant eu la candeur de dire: 'Si j'ai à choisir entre mon pays et mon Dieu, je choisis mon Dieu', fut hué par les cinq cents autres, menacé, appelé traître.[5]

He was naturally cruelly disillusioned by such an attitude of the Church and his condemnation of it forms the permanent theme of his Journal des Années de Guerre. His loss of faith in the moral significance of the Church kept growing as the years went by. In June 1937, he wrote in a letter to the French Indologist, Jean Herbert:

> Trop souvent, au cours de l'histoire, et d'hier et d'aujourd'hui, la règle des chefs de ces Eglises a été et est de se ranger aux côtés de tout pouvoir qui a la victoire, pourvu seulement qu'il ménage les privilèges de leur Eglise. Ainsi, ils s'associent

> dans l'injustice établie par la force.[6]

But this regrettable attitude of the Church was not going to affect his unshakeable belief in the brotherhood of mankind. To this belief he was committed and remained faithful to the last in spite of the bitter consequences. Because of the fact that his hero, Jean-Christophe, was a German, he (Rolland) was accused by French intellectuals like Henri Massis, of betrayal but, of course, to many broad-minded people, the John Christopher story was a serious plea for the brotherhood of mankind. To some critics like Edward Sapir, the great novel which won its author the 1915 Nobel Prize for literature is "An Epic of Humanity",[7] and we believe this judgement is highly justifiable. Because of the antagonism that the novel and his pacifism gave rise to, Romain Rolland had to face a formidable challenge from the nationalists. However, he was convinced that it was but a misunderstanding and he decided to meet the challenge. On March 15, 1915, he defined his position thus:

> Tandis que l'ouragan de la guerre continue de faire rage, déracinant les âmes les plus fermes et les entraînant dans son tourbillon furieux, je continue mon humble pelerinage, cherchant à découvrir sous les ruines les rares coeurs restés fidèles à l'ancien idéal de la fraternité humaine. Quelle joie mélancholique j'ai à les recueillir, à leur venir en aide! Je sais que chacun de leurs efforts comme les miens, chacune de leurs paroles d'amour soulève et retourne contre eux l'inimitié des deux camps ennemis. Les combattants aux prises sont d'accord pour haïr ceux qui refusent de haïr. L'Europe est devenue telle qu'une ville assiégée. La fièvre obsidionale y règne. Qui ne veut point délirer comme les autres est suspect. Et dans ces temps pressés où la justice ne s'attarde point à étudier les procès, tout suspect est un traître. Qui s'obstine à défendre, au milieu de la guerre, la paix entre les

> hommes, saît qu'il risque pour sa foi, son repos, sa réputation et ses amitiés mêmes. Mais que vaudrait une foi pour qui on ne risque rien?'

These are far from being empty words; for they are from a man who had been a champion of the right to free-thinking and of the sense of duty of each and every individual throughout his literary career. Besides, his writings bear witness to his strong faith in the brotherhood of mankind in the most fitting way. To such a man, then, the attitude of the Church and of the majority of intellectuals blinded by either selfish nationalistic feelings or fear, was entirely unacceptable. As far as the Church is concerned, he was convinced of its being useless in war time:

> Je ne crois pas que le mot de l'avenir appartienne au christianisme; j'y crois moins que jamais après cette crise, - quelque amour que j'aie pour le Christ: - toute religion ancienne a trop démontré son incapacité à s'opposer aux forces malfaisantes; le mieux qu'elle aît pu a été d'apprendre à les supporter noblement et à s'y résigner. Ce n'est pas assez. Elles (les religions anciennes) ont signé leur acte d'abdication. L'humanité a besoin de forces bienfaisantes, qui soient (dans le sens de non négatives) plus positives et moins incertaines.'

His hate for national selfishness was as deep as his love for brotherhood of mankind. In a letter to a political leader of India, he declared in 1927:

> L'égoïsme national est, en Europe, un si monstrueux fléau, et contre lequel ma vie s'est épuisé à lutter -- que je crois en voir partout l'ombre; et je suis armé contre lui, partout où je crois le voir s'insinuer.''

Such was the unbearable situation which forced Romain Rolland to turn towards a welcoming Asia.

Independent Discoveries

According to the lifelong companion of Romain Rolland, his sister Madeleine, the French writer had his first notion of Asia at the age of seventeen while reading Paul Saint-Victor's Les Deux Masques, a work on drama. He was quite enthusiastic about what the author had to say on Kalidasa's Shakuntala, a play that became very popular with Western romantics soon after its translation in several European languages. Then, during his "Ecole Normale" days, he experienced his first contact with Asian culture when, in the company of four fellow students he went to visit the Musée Guimet, the famous Parisian museum of Asian Arts. The students had the honour of being guided by Monsieur Guimet himself and nobody knew more about Buddhistic Art than he in Paris at that time. As far as young Romain Rolland and his friends were concerned, they knew next to nothing about that Art when they stepped into the museum on April 7, 1889. Of the five students, Romain Rolland was the most impressed by it:

> Le plus admirable dans l'art boudhique: cette expression géniale de suavité, d'amour paisible, concentré, de renoncement calme, de torpeur divine.
>
> Ce qui me reste de cette visite rapide et diffuse, c'est l'impression de l'unité de l'esprit humain. D'un bout du monde à l'autre, les hommes sont frères.''

He may not have known anything about Buddhistic Art before his visit to the museum but he definitely had a knowledge of Buddhistic mysticism as far back as 1887. Referring to a welcoming change in the attitude of his classmate, Suarès, he remarked that the latter "a complètement perdu son panthéisme païen de la Renaissance pour venir au mysticisme bouddhique de Romain Rolland."[12] Furthermore, his interest in Buddhism was no secret to his classmates. One of them, Mille, had seen in him "le Bouddha musical d'une mysticité révolutionaire."[13] Though a joke, this remark is far from being meaningless. Besides Buddhism, his curiosity had led him to Vedic literature at the Ecole Normale:

> Et pourtant, dès l'éveil de son avide curiosité, le jeune Romain Rolland découvre à Normale Supérieure, où il séjourne de 1886-1889, la traduction par Burnouf des épopées hindoues; lit et annote quelques passages de la *Bhagavad Gita*, qu'en admirateur du Trinacrien, il compare, arbitrairement, à un 'volcan', -- et dont, de longues années passées, il retrouvera des fragments au verso d'une page de *Danton*.[14]

The notes he took on the *Gita* were later put to use in the composition of his *Jean-Christophe*. In the 'Dans la Maison' book of this great novel when the two main characters, Jean-Christophe and Olivier are arguing about action and renunciation, Romain Rolland conveniently brings in the *Gita* and his Olivier uses the "sublime apostrophe" of Krishna:

> Lève-toi, et combats d'un coeur résolu. Indifférent au plaisir et à la douleur, au gain et à la perte, à la victoire et à la défaite, combats de toutes tes forces...[15]

Jean-Christophe for whom life itself is action even if this action means killing, uses the famous argument for action of Krishna:

> ...Je n'ai rien au monde qui me contraigne à agir: il n'est rien qui ne soit à moi; et pourtant je ne déserte point l'action. Si je n'agissais pas, sans trêve ni relâche, donnant aux hommes l'exemple qu'il leur faut suivre, tous les hommes périraient. Si je cessais un seul instant d'agir, je plongerais le monde dans le chaos, et je serais le meurtrier de la vie.''[6]

In the same book of the novel we come across another mention of India which shows that Rolland was not a complete stranger to Indian wisdom:

> Et ce vieil homme, qu'on croyait prosaïque et de coeur sec, arrivé au terme de sa vie, se répétait en secret la pensée tendre et amère d'un brahmane de l'Inde antique: 'L'arbre empoisonné du monde produit deux fruits plus doux que l'eau de la fontaine de la vie: l'un est la poésie, et l'autre est l'amitié.''[7]

Thus we may say that his curiosity was not useless nor was it going to lose its momentum after the Jean-Christophe saga. After the First World War his particular interest in Asia and in Buddhism became more pronounced. He had an opportunity to learn about the blossoming of Buddhism in Ceylon (the modern Sri Lanka) and he naturally turned it to account. The deep impression that the new discovery made on his mind manifests itself in the enthusiasm with which he wrote about it to his friend, Sofia Bertolini Guerrieri-Gonzaga, in 1917:

> ...On vous parle toujours du siècle de Périclès, du siècle de Léon X, du siècle de Louis XIV: en fait d'âges d'or, il y aurait beaucoup de réserves à objecter à ceux-ci; et, pour ma part, je n'eusse pas aimé à y vivre plus qu'au siècle présent. Mais pourquoi ne parle-t-on pas de certains âges d'épanouissement vraiment féerique de l'âme humaine? Un de ceux qui m'attirent le plus depuis que j'ai lu des fragments de la plus ancienne chronique hindoue, c'est la grande ère bouddhiste à Ceylan. Alors le pur bouddhisme régna, pendant plusieurs siècles, dans des villes splendides (aujourd'hui enfouies

> sous la végétation tropicale), des villes aux toits d'or, rayonnantes d'art, de foi et d'amour religieux pour tous les êtres - non seulement humains, mais vivants. Alors se réalisa sur la terre, dans un décor des Mille et une Nuits, le plus beau rêve religieux de l'humanité.'[8]

Obviously, this first impression had drawn him closer to Asia. At the same time it had made him realize how little the people in the West knew of Asian cultures and it was no doubt with a sad feeling that he acquainted his dear Sofia with this observation:

> Nous ne connaissons pas assez l'Asie. Notre pensée fiévreuse vit enfermée dans sa fourmilière d'Europe, où les myriades de bêtes s'agitent sans avancer sur un sol rongé jusqu'à l'os. - L'heure approche où les souces d'Asie se rouvriront, pour le renouvellement de l'âme humaine.'[9]

From the day he reached this conclusion, he left no stone unturned in his endeavour to explore and compare whatever is durable and of universal appeal in Asian culture and thought.

Coomarswamy

After the publication of his *Au-dessus de la Mêlée* in 1915 and its English version a year later, Romain Rolland had a pleasant surprise from an Indian scholar. It was an article entitled "A world policy for India", by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and dedicated to him. Like Rolland, Coomaraswamy showed the weaknesses of Europe which had at that time "reached the lowest level of her 'Christian cycle'...because her religion was the religion of time, and not of Christ."[10] He therefore suggested that India co-operate with Europe by giving its wisdom:

> Above all, let her return to Europe good for evil.
> If India is for the moment the uncreative, she has none the less at her command the wisdom and the tenderness of age. She is beyond the vigour of manhood and of fecundity, and she belongs to a past order. But in return for that, she holds in both her hands the science of peace. For she alone not merely formulated the most profound philosophy of the world, but endeavoured to construct a social organism, the Brahmanical theocracy on the foundations of philosophy and love.[21]

Is it surprising, then, that Romain Rolland chose to look towards Asia? Coomaraswamy's article was naturally warmly received by the author of *Jean-Christophe* who did not waste time in writing about it in glowing terms to his friends:

> J'ai reçu un admirable article qui m'était dédié, par un des Hindous les plus intelligents d'aujourd'hui (un article en anglais). Il juge avec une sérenité hautaine, cette faillite de l'Europe qui a écrasé son peuple, et contre laquelle il n'éprouve aucun sentiment hostile: seulement le désir que le christianisme impuissant se retrempe aux sources de la grande et pure pensée de l'Asie.[22]

Let it be noted by the way that this article was a powerful incentive in Rolland's interest in Indian thought. It was also Coomaraswamy who introduced Indian Fine Arts to the French author through his work on *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon* in 1915. To Rolland, this work was a wonderful discovery, a discovery that was going to crystalize his high hopes for the idea of brotherhood of nations of the world with the help of the wisdom of Asia. After having looked through Coomaraswamy's work, he wrote to his friend Alphonse de Châteaubriant:

> Et comme si ce bouillonnement des peuples d'Occident ne suffisait pas encore, voici l'Orient qui vient à moi. Un grand Hindou,...m'a, depuis, en réponse aux lettres que je lui ai écrites, envoyé d'autres livres, entre autres un volume de lui sur The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon, dont les illustrations m'ont jeté dans un abîme de ravissement.
>
> Je sens que ma mission est d'unir tous les peuples et toutes les pensées. Et je crois que cette mêlée où tous ils s'entrechoquent, y travaille avec nous.[33]

Along with his own work, the Indian scholar sent Rolland a copy of The Bhagavad Gita, the scripture that was going to be useful to the latter during his studies of Indian thought. Thus the Coomaraswamy experiment opened the doors of India to Rolland who gladly and hopefully embarked upon his discovery of that land through writings, correspondence, and personal contacts.

Tagore

The year following the Coomaraswamy experiment was equally favourable to Romain Rolland's conviction of the usefulness of Asia in the fight for world unity. It was the year when Rabindranath Tagore revealed himself as a great peacemaker in the East through his famous speech delivered at the Imperial University of Japan on June 18, 1916. The speech was published in extenso in the August 9, 1916 issue of The Outlook and in December Rolland was able to look through it. Previously he had known Tagore through his poetry which he recommended to his friends. As early as 1913 he told his dear Italian friend, Sofia Bertolini that reading Tagore's poetry would not only be a pleasant experience for her but would also do her much good. But knowing Tagore through his poetry and knowing him through his memorable speech were, for Rolland, two different things. The impact of that speech on his mind was tremendous. Reminiscing about it in his spiritual will, _Le Périple_, he writes:

> Mais dans ce même article, pour la première fois, ma main se tendait vers Tagore, porteur de la lumière d'Asie. Et cette main était aussitôt saisie par Tagore et l'Asie. La reconstruction, à côté de la ruine. Pas un jour sans espoir de renouveau!...Le soleil de nouveau, s'annonçait, à l'Orient. Déjà quelle aube splendide en ce verbe du mage de l'Inde, dont je n'avais cité que la prophétie de la chute de l'idole 'cannibale': la fausse civilisation politique d'Europe! Le destin était en marche. Mais la destruction qui venait sous les beaux pieds dansants de Civa, n'était plus le néant: c'était la résurrection... '_Ego sum Mors et Vita_...' La parole harmonieuse de Tagore ne chantait point la vengeance de l'Asie et sa domination sur l'Europe ruinée, mais (dans ce même discours de Tokyo) la régénération de l'Europe par l'Asie, et de l'Asie par l'Europe, la beauté de leur union pour la gloire de l'homme. J'arrivais au même but, par mes chemins de France. Et nous nous reconnûmes.[14]

Tagore's Tokyo speech and Coomaraswamy's article were quite encouraging to Rolland who had just begun to appreciate the lofty ideals of Indian intellectuals. The speech was more than enough to win Tagore a privileged place in the heart of the French writer. Even if they had never met, that speech would have hardly lost its impact on the latter. Henceforth, Rolland endeavoured to bring home to the West the best that Asia could offer in those hard times in proportion as his knowledge and love for the East deepened. To know Tagore first through his poetry and his speeches was a happy event for Rolland. It meant knowing not only the artistic talent of the poet who had been honoured by the Nobel Prize Committee a few years earlier but also the thoughts of the man behind the poet on such burning questions as the war in Europe and the attitude of Asia. It goes without saying that, at that early stage of Rolland's Asian experiment, knowing the views of such prominent figures as Tagore and Gandhi was of vital importance to him. No sooner had he read fragments of Tagore's Tokyo speech in Essor, a Geneva daily, in October 1916 than he was upset to notice that none of the leading periodicals of Europe had published it. He reacted promptly by writing an article entitled "Aux peuples assassinés", in which he welcomed Tagore's views and saw to it that it was published together with the poet's speech in such big cities as London, Paris, and Stockholm. According to Rolland the speech had marked a turning point in the history of the world and as far as Tagore himself is concerned, he was convinced that he (Tagore) was the man to bring harmony between East and West - a harmony which he could already feel vibrating in the poet; and he was far from being wrong:

> Yes, the East did once meet the West profoundly in the growth of her life. Such union became possible, because the East came to the West with the ideal that is creative, and not with the passion that destroys moral bonds. The mystic consciousness of the Infinite, which she brought with her, was greatly needed by the man of the West to give him his balance.
>
> On the other hand, the East must find her own balance in Science - the magnificent gift that the West can bring to her.[18]

Evidently, for both intellectuals, their first meeting in April 1921, was a significant event. But before that event took place, Rolland had written to the poet to invite him to join his group of pacifists in their "Déclaration d'indépendance de l'Esprit". Through him, Rolland hoped to win the support of several countries of Asia:

> ...Si vous pouviez nous recruter, dans l'Inde, au Japon, et en Chine, quelques noms, je vous en serais personellement très reconnaissant. Je voudrais que désormais l'intelligence de l'Asie prît une part de plus en plus régulière dans les manifestations de la pensée d'Europe. Mon rêve serait que l'on vît un jour, l'union de ces deux hémisphères de l'esprit; et je vous admire d'y avoir contribué plus que quiconque.[16]

Tagore naturally welcomed this initiative of his French friend and responded without delay in a way worthy of an intellectual. In June the same year he wrote to the latter expressing his approval in the language of a democrat:

> Les vérités qui nous sauvent ont toujours été émises par une minorité et rejetées par la majorité, et ont cependant triomphé malgré leurs manques. Il me suffit de savoir que la conscience la plus élevée de l'Europe a pu, par la voix de l'un de ses esprits les plus distingués, s'affirmer au-dessus des laides clameurs de politiciens passionnés; et c'est avec joie que je m'empresse d'accepter votre invitation à joindre les rangs de ces esprits libres qui, en Europe, ont conçu le projet d'une 'Déclaration d'Indépendance de l'Esprit'.[17]

If Rolland was able to appreciate Tagore's thought as expressed in his Tokyo speech, the latter was equally able to judge his French friend through his intentions which he found highly commendable.

Before meeting Tagore, Romain Rolland had the opportunity of welcoming an Indian intellectual when Dilip

Kumar Roy, a music teacher, paid him a visit in 1920 at Schoeneck sur Bekenreid. The meeting was an interesting one for Rolland. First, he had an initiation into Indian music and, secondly, he had new information on the English domination and on Mahatma Gandhi, the man for whom he had shown some admiration and praised in his essay afterwards. D.K. Roy was the son of a dramatic poet and composer and was studying Mathematics at Cambridge University. He gave Rolland an idea of his early training in vocal music by singing a composition of the most famous composer of Akbar's court, Tansen. The reaction of Rolland, the French musicologist, was spontaneous: he did not find it hard to establish the kinship between Tansen's music and Gregorian melodies. A few days after Roy's visit, Rolland wrote to Roy to express his views on Indian music. He found little difference between Indian music and European music:

> Les beaux chants que vous nous avez fait entendre me montrent combien le fossé est moins profond qu'il ne semble. En vérité, je me sentais plus près de ces formes d'art et de pensée musicale de la musique d'un Puccini ou d'un Massenet. Je crois que les Hindous musiciens - vous, Tagore, Coomaraswamy (dont je viens de lire le chapître sur la musique de l'Inde) - vous vous exagérez les différences qui séparent cette musique de la musique européene et les difficultés pour un Européen de la sentir. Vous jugez du tempérament musical européen d'après les Anglais et les Américains, qui sont les races européennes les moins musicales: (leur musique est presque inexistante)...
>
> Tâchons de reformer cette grande famille indo-européenne, qui a été criminellement dispersée. Elle eût été égale aux dieux, si elle avait été unie...[28]

The true image of India was gradually emerging. Two years later, Roy acquainted him with Gandhism and Indian politics. Earlier, he was able to have an idea of Tagore's political views by taking a good look at the poet's book entitled Nationalism. He was particularly happy about the fact that those views were quite relevant and he shared them without the least scruple:

> La lecture de Nationalism m'a été une grande joie, car je partage entièrement vos pensées, et je les aime encore davantage aujourd'hui que je les ai entendu exprimer par vous, avec cette haute et harmonieuse sagesse qui nous est chère en vous.[29]

The reading of Nationalism and The Home and the World was indeed a very significant prelude to Rolland's meeting with Tagore. The impact of the poet's thoughts on his mind was already evident.

The meeting with Tagore on April 19, 1921 marked a very significant point in Romain Rolland's relations with India as the two men had similar views about the reconciliation of Europe and Asia in particular and the brotherhood of mankind in general. The meeting took place but a year after the French writer had begun to take interest in the poet's highly valid thoughts. Nothing could have pleased the former so much as his guest's firm belief in the possibility of realizing an ideal pacifism with the help of India - the same kind of pacifism that the rest of the world was vainly longing for. According to Rolland that pacifism was to be achieved not by "renoncement...pauvreté de vie", but rather by "tranquille confiance en sa force, par surabondance de vie."[30]

The notion of Indian music Romain Rolland had from listening to D.K. Roy's songs was further elucidated by Tagore's views on music. Let it be noted that Tagore could understand and did appreciate European music such as the compositions of Bach, Beethoven and Debussy.

Tagore's idea of founding an International University at Santiniketan, near Bolpur in Bengal, was also discussed on the third day of the poet's visit. Reciprocating Rolland's kindness, the poet invited him and his life-long interpreter, his sister, Madeleine, at the seat of the "Autour du Monde" Foundation in Paris. After some discussion of the idea of an International University, the poet sang part of his Gitanjali (Song Offerings) which he had composed in musical form. Once again, Rolland could not help establishing the kinship between Indian classical music and European melodies. Before taking leave of his great friend, Rolland offered him a copy of his war novel, Clerambault: Histoire d'une Conscience Libre pendant la Guerre and his Empedocle d'Agrigente et l'Age de la Haine both works containing his wartime thoughts. On the eve of the poet's departure, they met again and the conversation was almost entirely on the question of the International University. Tagore was convinced that Asia had much to offer to Europe in the moral and intellectual field. Romain Rolland hardly disagreed when he remarked that:

> Le tableau qu'il fait du calme et de la douceur reposante de l'Inde m'amène à lui dire que beaucoup d'Européens, comme moi, cherchaient en vain dans le monde un refuge contre les brutalités présentes: nous ferons donc choix de l'Inde. Tagore m'y offre affectueusement chez lui l'hospitalité.[31]

In his letter of December 28, 1922, the poet had invited him to visit India. He would have liked to welcome the opportunity and see the land of his dreams but he was already seriously at work on Gandhism. With the help of his sister and Tagore's student and friend, Kalidas Nag, he had started preparing his essay on Mahatma Gandhi. Tagore's estimate of Rolland came to the latter in an indirect way - in a letter to Kalidas Nag. Alluding to his new French friend in that letter, the poet wrote:

> ...Of all the men I confronted in the Occident, it was Rolland that struck me as the nearest to my heart and most akin to my spirit. My greatest regret was my inability to exchange my ideas directly with Rolland owing to the barrier of language. But all the same, as the result of my interview with Rolland, I came back to India more confident than ever, to make living, in the heart of our people, those ideals to which men like Rolland have dedicated their lives...Men like Rolland have accepted voluntarily the career of penance and purification (Tapasyâ) for the welfare of Humanity as a whole. For them, there does not exist the distinction between their country and the Universe. That is why they are being hounded by the champions of Patriotism and Nationalism. But my whole heart is with Rolland and his small band of colleagues. The ultimate victory is ours for we are on the side of Truth wherein is real Liberty and true Emancipation.[32]

Obviously, Tagore did not take a long time to know the character of Rolland in depth. Very few are those who have paid the French writer a similar tribute.

After three fruitless plans for a second visit to his new French friend, Tagore finally reached Villeneuve, the new hometown of the latter, on June 22, 1926. The poet stayed at Hotel Byron in the same apartment occupied by Victor Hugo, some forty years earlier and had decided to spend some fifteen days in Switzerland. Rolland naturally welcomed that rather long stay of the poet at a place where on August 19, 1883 he saw Victor Hugo, the author he had always admired. Tagore, too, had tasted the flavour of Hugo's poetry and in 1886 he translated a few of his poems for his collection, Kadi O Komal.

Of the three visits Tagore paid to Rolland, the second one has been considered to have meant most to both men. As the poet's stay was a longer one, Rolland availed himself of that opportunity to deepen his knowledge of the Indian poet's thought on various topics such as Italian fascism, music, poetry, painting, plastic arts, Indian politics and Gandhi, Aurobindo Ghose, and his philosophy. While Rolland was enjoying his lengthy conversations with the poet, his sister, Madeleine, the interpreter, was making the most of the Bengali tuition the poet was giving her. Tagore had enjoyed his stay so much that he did not wait for his return to India to express his satisfaction to his host. From Vienna, he wrote:

> Avant de partir de l'Inde, j'avais en tête un but fixe, c'était de vous rencontrer. Et nous nous sommes recontrés, et bien que ç'ait été quelques jours seulement, ces jours ont été pleins, - des jours de réjouissance. Dans une fête on a le foyer

et beaucoup d'autres choses en plus.[33]

The third and last visit of Tagore to Romain Rolland took place in August, 1930. This time, it was in Geneva that Rolland and his sister met him on August 28, and the conversation was mainly on Hinduism, for, by then, the poet had had time to go through Rolland's writings on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. The French writer was not surprised to note that the Indian bard openly attacked Hindu polytheism, the Kali cult in particular and all the superstitions ruining his people. That was probably the most significant revelation Rolland had received from his two-hour conversation with the poet who was taken by surprise by his remark on the association of Christianism with bloody sacrifices:

> Je veux rappeler à Tagore par cet exemple que les plus hautes religions monothéistes ont les mêmes sources sanglantes que ce qui'il flétrit dans l'Inde, sous le nom de Kâli. - J'ajoute que l'important est de sublimer ces profonds instincts (au lieu de vouloir les extirper), et qu'il est bien saisissant de voir cet Ancien Testament qui fume de la graisse des victimes, s'épanouir en cette fleur suprême de l'Evangile: l'Agneau de Dieu, le Christ innocent sacrifié. (Je suis bien sûr que Tagore en conservera le saisissement inattendu.)[34]

But such differences in opinion were not going to spoil the relationship that meant so much to both men. On the contrary, both gained from the exchange of views carried out in such a sincere and open manner. On the one hand, the French writer was looking forward to meeting the Indian poet for the conversation and on the other, the latter had been looking for a reliable friend in the West - a friend who would concur with him in his endeavour to bring about good understanding between East and West by awakening all the "travailleurs des esprits" - writers of the world. There was a strong desire on both sides to meet for an exchange of ideas. Besides, Rolland had chosen to look towards Asia. When, in September 1930, he was requested by his Indian friends to invite Tagore's friends to observe the poet's seventieth birthday, he wrote that in spite of the fact that the poet did not want anything special for that occasion, each and every one was to show his feeling of respect and gratitude for having benefited from his wisdom:

> Cette date doit rassembler autour de lui ses amis dans le monde, tous ceux dont la vie a été éclairée, élargie, ennoblie par la sienne. Il a été pour nous le symbole vivant de l'Esprit de lumière et d'harmonie, qui plane, grand oiseau libre, au milieu des tempêtes, - le chant d'éternité qu'Ariel fait vibrer sur sa harpe d'or, au-dessus de la mer des passions déchaînées...Mais, en signe de gratitude, que chacun lui offre une branche de son jardin: un poème, un essai, un chapitre de livre, une recherche scientifique, un dessin, une pensée! - Car tout ce que nous sommes et ce que nous avons créé a ses racines ou ses rameaux baignés dans le grand fleuve Gange de poésie et d'amour.[33]

We must not overlook the fact that Romain Rolland's dream was to know, by all the means worthy of an intellectual, India, the land which, according to him, for more than thirty centuries had been and still is "cette chaude terre, brûlante matrice des Dieux..."[34] As we go through his correspondence and the pages of his diary, we realize how enthusiastically he endeavoured to make that dream come true. Nobody has described this endeavour so aptly as Jean Biès:

> Mais à mesure que le rêve s'inaugure réalité, vient se préciser, s'imposer la nécessité des lettres, des contacts, des rencontres, dont le Journal tiendra un compte assidu; peuplé d'hôtes de passage, d'admirateurs, de correspondants et d'amis, abondant de preuves d'un intérêt croissant, des marques de curiosité, d'étonnement, d'adhésion. Rien de ce qui est indien ne lui est étranger: tour à tour Rolland s'informe des différences de races et musiques de l'Inde, des poètes, des artistes, et de leur talent; - de l'action du Congrès, des conditions d'existence imposées aux paysans, des convulsions du pays sous les réseaux de police anglaise; - de l'enseignement philosophique, des modes de vie des sages, des pouvoirs supérieurs du raja-yoga. Il s'amuse même à recueillir diverses commérages à noter scrupuleusement ce qui lui est rapporté de Ramakrishna, de Vivekananda, ou ce qu'il observe lui-même de Tagore et de Gandhi. Peu à peu se révèle à lui toute une Inde artistique et intellectuelle, sociale et politique, spirituelle et mystique, dont il va désormais arpenter les richesses.[37]

It is worth mentioning that Tagore's contribution to the realization of Rolland's dream was quite significant, for after all, he was from the land of unity in diversity and was fighting for the respect and dignity of mankind. It was particularly in the social, political, and cultural fields that Tagore was useful to Rolland. Who would deny the importance of Tagore in Rolland's knowledge of Gandhi and Gandhism? While being deeply concerned with the ideological differences separating Gandhi and the poet, Rolland learned much about the Mahatma himself. Let us point out that he wrote his essay on Gandhi almost three years after Tagore's first visit and that he came to know the poet's intimate feelings about the Mahatma and his movement through Kalidas Nag while preparing his essay. He was extremely happy to learn that Tagore had finally decided to co-operate with Gandhi. Referring to the poet's letter to Nag, he wrote in his diary:

> Nag nous communique copie d'une lettre que lui écrivit Tagore, en mai 1922: elle est d'accord avec ma pensée.
>
> 'Pendant mon voyage de retour aux Indes, j'ai pensé que Mahatma Gandhi évoque de façon profonde et étendue, dans l'âme de notre peuple, cette idée à laquelle des hommes comme Romain Rolland se sont consacrés. Aussi j'avais décidé de coopérer à son mouvement, par mes écrits et mon action.'[38]

Evidently, Tagore was more than convinced of Romain Rolland's dedication to the task of building a brotherhood of mankind. On August 10, 1925, the latter was informed that he was elected Honorary Member of the Visva-Bharati Association having been proposed by the President, Tagore.

Gandhi's Disciples And Associates

Before coming to Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Romain Rolland, it would be fitting to mention briefly the contribution of the late Dr. Kalidas Nag to Rolland's Indian experiment for evidently the Indian professor was, in many ways, a useful intermediary between the French writer and Tagore. Rolland, more than any one else, fully recognized his importance when he wrote about him to Tagore:

> Combien je suis obligé à Kalidas Nag de me donner de vos nouvelles: il est le plus précieux messager que nous ayons: l'Hermès indien, qui va de l'un à l'autre, portant les nouvelles d'Asie en Europe, et d'Europe en Asie, et réunissant leurs mains... Votre présence est son plus grand bonheur. Il est le plus fidèle et le plus pieux des amis. Ma soeur et moi l'aimons fraternellement.[39]

This "Indian Hermes" was a student at the Sorbonne preparing a thesis on "L'Ancienne Diplomatie Hindoue d'après les Textes sanscrits récemment découverts" when, on April 4, 1922, he paid Romain Rolland's sister a visit in Paris. Jean-Christophe had impressed him very much and he had found it in "la première oeuvre européenne qui ait parlé directement aux coeurs hindous, la seule qui soit universelle d'abord, avant d'être européenne."[40] The decision to come to Paris for his doctoral studies was made after he was advised by Tagore to leave Oxford for Paris. In the French capital he was at once attracted by the public lectures given at the Sorbonne and the Collège de France.

The long fraternal relationship between Romain Rolland and Kalidas Nag began in high respect on the latter's part. When the writer invited his new Indian friend for tea, the latter accepted with pleasure to come to "boire à la coupe de Vérité."[41] This respectful attitude is maintained till the end though the warm and affectionate relationship of the French writer was ever growing as the abundant correspondence extending over a period of fifteen years reveals. As we have mentioned earlier, Tagore had lavished praise on Rolland in his letter to Nag who sent a copy of it to the latter. It was from then on that Nag began to act as an intermediary as requested by Rolland himself: "Je ne veux pas ennuyer Tagore de mes pensées qui doivent lui être familières. Mais si vous croyez qu'il peut trouver un peu d'intérêt à quelques-unes d'entre elles, communiquez-les lui, je vous prie."[42] On finishing the writing of his Mahatma Gandhi, he wrote to Nag to inform him of what he had done in that first Indian work and what he told his new friend is worthy of note. Among other things, he wrote: "J'ai terminé mon Gandhi et j'y rends hommage à vos deux grands fleuves d'âmes, ruisselants de Dieu, Tagore et Gandhi."[43] It was a habit with Rolland to inform his friends of his literary activities before and after the publication of his works and as far as India was concerned, Nag was the principal correspondent who was well supplied with such information.

But Nag was not merely a correspondent; he did all he could to help Rolland realize his dream of discovering India, its people, and its culture. In a special article for the birth centenary of Rolland in 1966, he wrote:

> Rolland also wrote two philosophical books on the life and thoughts of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, which he kindly presented to me - for I supplied to him and his sister, Indian commentaries and notes, etc., as published by the Ramakrishna Institute of Culture...I had the satisfaction of helping him in completing his masterly study of Gandhiji, which was published in English translation by Ganeshan and Co., Madras.[44]

But that was not all: he also helped popularize Rolland's writings in India:

> Thanks to the kind interest of the late Sri Ramananda Chatterjee, I as a humble disciple of Rabindranath and Romain Rolland, worked hard for years to publish articles on and from Rolland, in Bengali, in Prabasi, as well as in English in Modern Review.[45]

Such service rendered to Romain Rolland at a time when he was keenly interested in Asia, should not be allowed to pass unnoticed particularly when one knows that the French writer himself was not only aware of Nag's devotion but also concerned about his well-being:

> Mon bien cher Nag, vous êtes décidément le seul Indien Bengali qui unisse aux qualités de votre race celles d'exactitude, d'action prompte et précise, qui sont l'apanage de l'Europe, et dont nous avons tant besoin pour une action commune. Mais un seul, c'est peu. Vous ne pouvez tout faire; vous seriez écrasé, et je veux que vous vous ménagiez votre chère santé.[44]

But, as we have pointed out above, Kalidas Nag never ceased to serve Rolland. It is hardly surprising that such a man had planned to write a biography of Rolland with the consent of the latter. Had the project materialized it would have been no doubt a major contribution to India's gratitude towards its great French friend.

On May 20, 1926 - some four years before Romain Rolland was honoured by Gandhi's visit, he had the pleasure to welcome the Mahatma's famous disciple, Jawaharlal Nehru who was accompanied by his sick wife and seven-year-old daughter, Indira, destined to become the Prime Minister of India. The illness of the politician's wife had brought them to Switzerland where the patient was to be treated for tuberculosis. From this contact, Rolland obtained a clear picture of the political scene in India. He noted the pessimism of his visitor regarding the divide and rule policy of the British.

Almost a year later, Nehru paid Rolland a second visit. This time the French writer noticed that the Indian politician had changed his mind about Gandhism, particularly about its moral and religious aspects. In other words, he noted that his Indian friend had withdrawn from Gandhi's movement to a certain extent without, however, losing faith in or respect for the Mahatma.

Of greater importance to Romain Rolland was the visit, on October 4, 1926, of Dhan Gopal Mukerji, the writer who took Miss Katherine Mayo to task for having hatefully misrepresented facts in her book, Mother India.[47] In him Rolland saw "...le grand artiste, qui, le premier, m'a révélé Ramakrishna."[48] As a matter of fact it was the latter's book, The Face of Silence, that revealed the personality of Ramakrishna to Rolland and his sister. Recording this long-awaited visit in his diary, Rolland wrote:

> J'ai été saisi par la lecture que m'a faite ma soeur de quelques pages du livre de Mukerji, que j'ai senti aussitôt le devoir d'étudier et de faire connaître en Europe la personnalité extraordinaire de Ramakrishna et de son fougueux disciple, Vivekananda.[49]

We may safely consider this reaction of Rolland to Mukerji's book as the genesis of his interest in Vedantic mysticism. Soon after his new friend learned of this interest, he tried to help Rolland realize his project. He left the French writer and his sister, who were already attracted by "les personnalités presque mythiques de Sri Ramakrishna et de

Vivekananda"[50] and on his return to India, he put them in touch with the Ramakrishna Mission of Calcutta and sent them a good stock of literature concerning the Mission. The French writer was impressed by his new field of interest and when Miss Josephine MacLeod, Vivekananda's friend, brought him the books he began making notes of their contents with the help of his sister. From then on, the serious work on Vedantic mysticism was going to keep them busier than ever before. Their research resulted in the publication of _Essai sur la Mystique et l'Action de l'Inde Vivante_ (1929-1930) and of its English version, _Prophets of the New India_ in 1930. This work of Rolland's which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, was appropriately dedicated to: "ma fidèle compagne dans ce périple de l'Ame, ma soeur, Madeleine, sans qui je n'aurais pu accomplir ce long voyage."[51]

Besides his work on Ramakrishna, Mukerji had planned to show his impression of Gandhi in a biography but the father of Non-Violence never gave him his consent because, according to Rolland, he was embarrassed by the admiration of his friends. Rolland was happy to learn from his visitor that Gandhi had not been untouched by the spiritual influence of Ramakrishna.

At this point a few words about Romain Rolland's meeting with Miss Josephine MacLeod, the close friend of Vivekananda, would not be out of place. Her contribution in acquainting the French writer with the personality of the faithful disciple of Ramakrishna was opportune. The importance of Miss MacLeod, lies in the fact that she was not only Vivekananda's close friend for seven years since she met him in the United States but also followed the Vedantist in his Indian peregrinations from 1898 onwards. Though she returned to the United States, she was back in India soon after and was with Vivekananda during the last three months of his life. It was from her that Rolland learned about the circumstances surrounding Vivekananda's unexpected and sudden death in 1902. In other words, he learned that the Indian spiritual leader never came back to life once he went into Samadhi (contemplation) the night after he had revealed the following intimate thought to his disciples: "L'Inde est immortelle, si elle persiste dans la recherche de Dieu. Mais elle mourra, si elle entre dans la politique et dans les luttes sociales."[52] Concerning the Swami's attitude towards Europe, Rolland learned that he was "ennemi-né de la logique d'Europe, de l'éternelle mécanisation des actes et des pensées, qui prétend les 'organiser', en les pétrifiant",[53] and that he wanted "la perpétuelle liberté du flot intérieur".[54] Like Ramakrishna, he found the Puritanic or Christian obsession with the idea of eternal sin, unbearable. But he demanded of his disciples a complete lucidity and an absolute necessity of sincerity and purity. Rolland was no doubt pleased to note that Vivekananda had adopted from the West the discipline he imposed upon his monks as much as he demanded of them the obligation to serve others. Regarding this compulsory service, Rolland was informed that the Ramakrishna Mission had already founded thirty monasteries, more than two hundred schools and dispensaries from the North to the South of India. This practical side of the Mission was most interesting to Rolland.

Besides, Miss MacLeod knew fairly well Vivekananda's most faithful English disciple, Sister Nivedita (née Margaret Noble), daughter of a Protestant minister, who after arguing perpetually with Vivekananda at the end of each London lecture, was finally convinced of the validity of the lecturer's views and became his faithful disciple for the rest of her life. Through her relationship with Sister Nivedita, Miss MacLeod learned much about life at the Math (monastery) of Belur. But what was more interesting was her acquaintance with Sarada Devi, Ramakrishna's wife. All the information regarding the mystic and his disciple she obtained from this devotee, was of value to Rolland. One good example of such information to which Rolland draws our attention in particular concerns the role of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in the spiritual field:

> Miss MacLeod disait, un jour, à Sarada Devi (la femme de Ramakrishna): - 'Votre mari a eu la bonne part; il n'a eu à porter la bonne parole que dans l'Inde, parmi les siens: aussi ça a été pour lui toute joie. La mission de Vivekananda a été bien plus pénible: il a dû être le porteur de la pensée de l'Inde au dehors, parmi les peuples étrangers et hostiles; il a eu le lot le plus héroïque.' 'Oui,' répondit Sarada Devi, très simplement, 'il était le plus grand. Mon mari disait que lui, était le corps, et Vivekananda la tête.'"

Parallel to Miss MacLeod's role as intermediary was the role of Miss Madeleine Slade, daughter of an English Admiral in charge of the English fleet in the Indian Ocean. Once she became converted to Gandhian faith, she decided to join the Mahatma at the Sabarmati Ashram and dedicate herself to his movement. When she visited Rolland in October, 1923, she was still a patron of art but as such she was ruining herself. Rolland was quite happy when she finally decided to go to Sabarmati in October, 1925 and warmly recommended her to the Mahatma:

> Vous recevrez bientôt à Sabarmati Miss Madeleine Slade, que vous avez bien voulu admettre dans votre Ashram. Elle nous est, à ma soeur et à moi, une amie chère; et je la considère comme une fille spirituelle. Je suis heureux qu'elle aille se mettre sous votre direction. Je sais quel bien ce sera pour elle; et je suis convaincu que vous trouverez en elle une de vos disciples les plus fermes et les plus fidèles. Elle porte en son âme une admirable énergie et une ardeur de dévouement. Elle est simple, elle est vraie. L'Europe ne peut offrir à votre cause un coeur plus noble et plus désintéressé. Qu'elle vous porte l'amour de milliers d'Européens, et ma vénération.[56]

Far from disappointing either Rolland or Gandhi, this English lady proved to be an excellent intermediary between the two great men. Two years after she had left for India, Rolland noted in his diary: "Notre amie Mira (Madeleine Slade), qui, de l'Inde, continue de correspondre régulièrement avec ma soeur, et de décrire avec une flamme inextinguible ses expériences de la vie religieuse avec Gandhi et ses disciples.[57] When we go through the lengthy correspondence of Madeleine Slade, we are inclined to believe that Rolland's essay on Gandhi would have been richer in information had he written it a few years later. Besides, it was but after the publication of this work that the exchange of views between Gandhi and Rolland really started and the personal contact took place but eight years after he had written his essay. Hence the importance of Madeleine Slade's correspondence. Rolland could depend on her for, unlike Miss MacLeod, she had been in India since she was fifteen years old. There was no doubt in Rolland's mind as to her suitability for becoming an excellent disciple of the Mahatma:

> Je la vois comme une des Saintes Femmes qui entouraient Jésus, et qui firent sa légende. Je crois que, si rien ne déroute les prévisions humaines, elle est appelée à jouer un grand rôle dans l'établissement de la légende et de la foi du nouveau Christ.[58]

If Madeleine Slade was not able to win her parents on her side after having taught her mother how to spin and her father how to weave, she certainly was successful in convincing both Rolland and Gandhi of the sincerity of her noble act. The latter was as delighted by that act as the French writer:

> What a treasure you have sent me! I shall try to be worthy of the great trust. I shall leave no stone unturned to assist her to become a bridge between East and West. I am too imperfect to have disciples. She shall be a fellow seeker with me and as I am older in years and therefore presumably in spiritual experience I propose to share the honour of fatherhood with you. Miss Slade is showing wonderful adaptability and has already put us at ease about herself.
>
> I must leave the rest to be told by Miss Slade...[59]

Thus, the English devotee became a precious link between the Mahatma and Rolland.

Of Madeleine Slade's contribution to Romain Rolland's knowledge of the evolution of contemporary Gandhism, there is much to be noted. Her "lettres d'extase"[10] were not only warmly received but also had a wonderful effect on Rolland:

> La suite de ses lettres à ma soeur formera plus tard un des plus étonnants dossiers d'histoire religieuse. Ses entretiens avec le Mahatma, et l'esprit d'adoration dans lequel elle les écoute et les retient évoquent un nouvel Evangile. Certainement Gandhi n'est pas inférieur au Christ en bonté, en sainteté; et il le surpasse en touchante humilité. Quant à Madeleine Slade, c'est bien, comme je l'avais prévu, une Sainte Femme de ce nouveau Sauveur.[11]

In a way, Madeleine Slade was to Gandhi what Madeleine Rolland was to her brother. They were both interpreters and without them the language barrier would have certainly created a problem. Moreover, it was mainly through his letters to Miss Slade that Rolland was expressing his views on Gandhi's thought which was brought to his knowledge by her letters. When finally correspondence was not sufficient to dispel some misunderstandings concerning Gandhi's participation in the First World War, personal contact was considered desirable by the Mahatma and his feelings were conveyed to Rolland by Miss Slade thus:

> He is influenced above all by the profound wish to go and meet you. The call has always been there, but now, since your last exchange of letters, it has become imperative.
>
> If the idea appeals to you, Bapu would like to spend some time near you so that you might understand each other to the bottom - that you might absorb each other - and that the slightest

> misunderstandings might be removed for good and all.[42]

When at long last, the two great men met in December 1931, Miss Slade was again of great use as interpreter. But before we come to this visit which Rolland had expected to happen for such a long time, we would mention briefly two other friends of both Gandhi and Rolland who contributed to the latter's knowledge of Gandhian philosophy though his acquaintance of them came after he had published his essay on the Mahatma. Recalling his meeting with these two European friends, he wrote:

> La grande influence qui domina, dans ces années, mon esprit, a été celle de Gandhi. Le petit livre que je lui ai consacré venait d'être achevé, en février 1923, quand je fis à Londres, en mai 1923, la connaissance de C.F. Andrews, puis en septembre de la même année, de W.W. Pearson qui avaient été les deux compagnons de Gandhi, dans sa lutte épique en Sud-Afrique. Ces deux hommes, dont l'un, Pearson, devait mourir tragiquement, quelques jours après m'avoir quitté, me firent songer aux premiers apôtres du Christ: ils en avaient la virile et simple serenité.[43]

The first of these friends, Rev. Charles Freer Andrews, was Professor at Shanktiniketan, Tagore's International University and a link between the poet and Gandhi. When, in April 1923, Rolland came to know him in London, he had already spent some twenty years in India and proved to be a great friend of that country by his significant contribution to the reconciliation between the South African Government and Gandhi in 1914. As far as Rolland is concerned, this new friend was not only a man whose testimony was "si précieux pour [son] étude sur Gandhi",[44] but also a man whose intimate acquaintance with Gandhi and Tagore was useful particularly at that early stage of his Indian experiment. It was from Andrews that he had his first knowledge of the views of Tagore and Gandhi on idol-worshipping, nationalism and internationalism, war and peace; it was with the help of Andrews that Rolland had formed his idea of their weaknesses and the best they had to offer to humanity. But of greater importance to Rolland was Andrews' version of the influence of Vivekananda's philosophy on the Mahatma. The French writer was particularly happy to learn that like Vivekananda, Gandhi saw God in the form of the poor and the oppressed and also that Andrews, like himself, disapproved of Gandhi's "rôle de recruter, pour l'Angleterre, au début de la guerre; et ses prédications pour boycotter et brûler la marchandise étrangère".[68] In 1930, when Tagore recognized Gandhi's greatness after their conversation, Andrews conveyed that information to Rolland when he visited the latter in August that very year. He also gave Rolland an account of the two conversations between Einstein and Tagore as well as of Tagore's series of lectures on "The Religion of Man". Rolland noted Tagore's creed that the whole of humanity is in one Being whose Unity each and every one of us feels within himself. Andrews seemed to share this notion when he confessed to Rolland that he had always felt the impression of joy and peace in Unity when he was in India. The deep-rooted belief of Tagore in monotheism was particularly appealing to Rolland. It would be appropriate to mention, in this context, Tagore's deep faith in the spiritual world and its universal appeal. The poet maintained that "the spiritual world...is the world of perfect harmony"[66] and he stressed the fact that "India put all her emphasis on the harmony that exists between the individual and the universal".[67] As Andrews' familiarity with Gandhi and Tagore grew into a close relationship, Rolland had much to gain by trusting him. By his own admission, the information given to him by Andrews was very useful for the preparation of his book on Gandhi. Besides, both the French writer and his Scottish friend seemed to have a similar opinion of Gandhi and Tagore: "Andrews approuve ma comparaison de Gandhi à St. Paul et de Tagore à Platon. Il dit en souriant que Gandhi est tout à fait St. Paul."[68]

Andrews was aware of the fact that there was an affinity of mind between these two Indians and himself. But what he felt more was the influence of Tagore upon him:

> Twenty-five years ago, my whole heart was given to the poet Rabindranath Tagore, and it has remained with him ever since. He has been my Gurudeva, teaching me to understand and love humanity in the East, no less than I had learnt in earlier years in the West. By his love and patience he broke down within me the narrow barriers of religious tradition which had confined me before owing to my birth, upbringing and education. Nothing but friendship so deep and sincere as his could have affected this...I can say with truth that this friendship has grown stronger as the years have passed and has remained steadfast throughout. It has been a supreme treasure in life, the greatest gift God has given me in human ways.[69]

Along with Rev. C.F. Andrews was yet another European who proved to be a great friend of India and whose friendship was dear to Gandhi, Tagore and Rolland. He was William Winstanley Pearson, a Christian missionary who accompanied Gandhi and Andrews in Transvaal, South Africa and then taught at the International University of Tagore like his friend, Andrews. Both religious men had to bear the ill-treatment of the ever vigilant Brtish Intelligence Department because of their friendship for Gandhi and Tagore and of their open condemnation of the exploitation programme of European races.

W.W. Pearson visited Romain Rolland in September, 1923 at Villeneuve where Kalidas Nag was spending a week with the French writer. It was from Pearson that Rolland learned about Tagore's sad plight after he had spent all his personal fortune on his University. Then followed his account of Gandhi's visit to that University and of his dealings in South Africa. After attending the meetings of the League of Nations in Geneva, Pearson came back to Villeneuve and this time Rolland learned more about Tagore and his University; about the terrible system of espionage encompassing the whole of India and of the victims of this network one of whom was then no less a figure than the great Indian philosopher, Aurobino Ghose. Rolland was relieved to hear that this philosopher was able to avoid the British death sentence by fleeing to French Pondichéry where Pearson went to visit him. It was unfortunate indeed for Rolland that his relationship with Pearson lasted but for a few days for the latter died after he accidentally fell from the train while on his way to Florence from Milan. For Rolland the loss was more than a personal one:

> J'en suis bouleversé. Non seulement c'est une perte irréparable pour Santiniketan et pour Tagore, dont il était le compagnon fidèle, et peut-être le plus sûr soutien, mais il m'est personnellement une douleur très vive: car les deux seuls jours que j'avais vu Pearson m'avaient suffi à l'aimer...Noble et stoïque victime de sa générosité chevaleresque, qui l'avait séparé de son peuple et voué à partager la vie d'un peuple très loin de lui, chez qui il était un étranger.[10]

It was from Tagore himself that Rolland learned about the great service rendered by Pearson to India - a service comparable but to Rev. Andrews'. When, in April 1940, the latter too, left this world as a victim of cancer, Rolland could hardly pay his homage to the man without mentioning the name of Pearson:

> Adieu, Andrews et Pearson, qui vous teniez, pleins de vaillance, aux côtés du jeune Gandhi, en S.-Afrique, - vous qui avez été tous deux, mes hôtes, à la villa Olga! Le monde ne se doute pas des héros et des saints, qui l'ont illuminé.[11]

But more meaningful are the words of Rev. Andrews himself concerning Pearson's great love for India. In a special memoir he wrote:

> His passionate devotion to India had always about it something of a lover; and when the news came that, in his last illness, while he was lying unconscious, he had murmered in his pain: 'My one and only love, - India,' it was not difficult to understand the cry; for it was a life-long passion with him, and a devotion that was stronger than death.[12]

It goes without saying that in Pearson, India had lost a great friend coming from that very country whose domination she could no longer bear.

Almost a year after W.W. Pearson's visit, Romain Rolland welcomed the great Indian political leader, Lala Lajpat Rai who had been to London to meet members of the Labour Party. What pleased Rolland most was that his visitor shared his views on Gandhian politics and on the decadence of Europe. On his second visit a month later, the Indian politician informed Rolland of what he thought was the wrong direction taken by Gandhi. In other words, he expressed the opinion that war and not non-violence was the solution for a country like India. A man like Rolland could never share such an opinion. He made it clear to his friend that war would mean utter ruin for his country. It was not surprising to Rolland to notice, two years later, when Lajpat Rai paid him a third visit that this old friend of Gandhi had become "le moins gandhiste des hommes",[13] and as such was of little interest to him. But such difference in views was not going to spoil the relationship between the two men. When the Indian political leader was in France in 1924, Rolland asked him to correct the errors he had made in his essay on Gandhi and after having kindly done the editing work the former wrote:

> Some of the mistakes are quite trifling. Others are important no doubt but wonderfully few. The book on the whole is a remarkable feat for a foreigner who has studied the whole subject by means of translations and through works and materials scattered, neither properly arranged nor properly indexed...

> I am submitting them to you at your express desire with my unreserved compliments for the excellent grasp of the subject you have displayed in your book.'[4]

Rolland, in his turn, did not hesitate to write a post mortem preface to Lajpat Rai's Unhappy India, a work written in reply to Miss Katherine Mayo's "outrageous libel", Mother India. Paying due tribute to his Indian friend in that preface, he wrote:

> The great voice which makes itself heard here in reply to Miss Mayo's outrageous libel, rises, alas! from the tomb. Lajpat Rai fell a year ago, a victim to the brutalities of the British Police in Lahore. His death crowned a life devoted entirely to the service of India...'Unhappy India' cried Lajpat Rai, defending his martyred land, but I say 'Happy India' who, in this age of Europe of poor character and mediocre virtue, has created such pure devotions, and whose sacred womb has given birth to a host of heroes - Dayananda, Vivekananda, M.K. Gandhi, and this lion of the Punjab, Lajpat Rai!'[5]

Among that "host of heroes" was also Subhas Chandra Bose, a former mayor of Calcutta who became a very active member of the left wing of the Indian Congress. His visit to Rolland in April 1932 was important in that it brought to him a good picture of the socialistic branch of Indian politics. Imprisoned for more than six years, his health had suffered and he came to Europe for treatment but also to avoid further persecution by the British who were determined to stamp out any hostile movement by violent means. At the time he met Rolland his book on the history of Indian politics had just been published and the French writer was pleased to have him discuss political matters though, evidently, he was far from approving his visitor's ideology.

Admittedly, Bose was not a supporter of the Gandhian non-violent principles. Though Bose considered terrorism as an unsound means to achieve one's end, he did not exclude it from his plan of Civil Resistance. Rolland made it clear to him that though his sympathy for India had never faltered, he had chosen to remain totally uncommitted to any political doctrine of that country, including that of Gandhi. After Bose's visit he wrote to him to explain his views on violence and non-violence. He believed that the Gandhian Non-Violence movement was but "une grande Expérience"[76] which could not be the "pivot central de toute l'action sociale".[77] As far as violence goes, he was not against its use if it was necessary to combat "cet état de choses odieux, qui est le Crime en permanence",[78] which he defined as the exploitation by the capitalists, military imperialism resulting from that exploitation, and the oppression of the poor masses. To fight against the "Crime social" he suggested a combination of both violent and non-violent means:

> Il faut donc agir contre lui, par toutes les armes de non-violence et de violence, qui peuvent le plus promptement, le plus sûrement, atteindre au but. Je ne répudie aucune arme, pourvu qu'elle soit aux mains de combattants braves, francs et désintéressés. Ma tâche propre a été, depuis quelques années, de tâcher d'allier ensemble les forces de non-violence et de violence révolutionnaires, dans le combat commun contre le Crime social, contre l'ordre ancien qui asservit et qui exploite l'humanité.[79]

Had it not been for Bose's visit, this enlightenment on Rolland's views would not have been known to those who were in the thick of the fight and who wanted his (Rolland's) support. Moreover, we must bear in mind that Bose came to Rolland at a time when India needed every support for her fight for independence and, ironically enough, it was at that particular crucial time that some French intellectuals were spreading the rumour that Rolland was about to part with the Indians for he was no longer interested in their country. But Rolland, in spite of his frequent disappointment with the attitude of some of the Indian leaders, never let his Indian friends down for he knew only too well that their cause was a just one. When, in March 1936, Bose decided to return to India in spite of the fact that he was informed that he would be imprisoned on his arrival there, Rolland wrote to him to assure him and indirectly all Indians of his sympathy: "Nous nous hâtons de lui adresser nos voeux de sympathie dans les risques qu'il va courir et ses combats pour l'indépendance de l'Inde."[89]

Jean Herbert

After Bose's visits, Rolland was delighted to meet the first indologist ever since he had been interested in India. He was the well-known scholar, Jean Herbert, who was then the French translator of Vivekananda's works. For the first time Rolland heard about his ever growing popularity in India, the land he was never able to visit because of unforeseen circumstances. The French scholar who had travelled widely in India, assured him that for Indian intellectuals, France had become the country of Romain Rolland. This great encouragement came six years after the publication of the latter's works on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

A year later, Jean Herbert paid Rolland and his sister another visit after having attended the Parliament of Religions which marked the end of the Ramakrishna centenary celebrations in India. He had also visited Aurobindo Ghose, the well-known philosopher, at his ashram in Pondichéry and had fresh information about the latter and his feelings for Rolland. According to Herbert, the international reputation of the philosopher had grown so much that he was offered the presidency of the Parliament of Religions. But as far as Rolland was concerned, Aurobindo Ghose was an aristocrat-philosopher who, after having written some illuminating articles for the periodical Arya and some good commentaries on the Gita, gave up the serious work and devoted his time writing "belles pensées, lumineuses, frappantes, volontiers jouant sur les antithèses, et harmonieusement équilibrées."[81] But these, he believed, were good as a stimulant for the minds of the elite but did not enlighten. Again and again Rolland was begged to write a book on Aurobindo Ghose as a sequel to his works on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda but he preferred to stick to his Poverello (the little poor man) of Bengal, Ramakrishna, for the following valid reasons:

> Mais si je consens à lui faire crédit j'ai peine à lui pardonner son aristocratisme. C'est un Ashram pour riches. En notre époque de douloureux combat pour diminuer la misère et l'oppression, il est terriblement égoïste de s'enfermer dans son Ashram capitonné, pour y chercher la plénitude de son développement non contrarié. Ce sont là jeux de privilégiés.[42]

This open condemnation of intellectual aristocratism did not come as a sudden change in Rolland's aesthetic concept. His contempt for it grew gradually and became more pronounced from 1930 onwards.

Herbert had brought back more interesting information than that regarding Aurobindo Ghose and his Ashram. The tangible progress made by the Ramakrishna Mission in social services was appealing to Rolland. He was quite flattered to hear that the entire Ramakrishna Order had recognized the fact that the universal extension of the thought and fame of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda was due to his works on these thinkers.

When, in June 1937, Herbert decided to publish a Vedantic periodical in Switzerland, Rolland readily agreed to collaborate provided his writings were not adapted to suit the taste of the editor. Rolland did not doubt about the sincerity of Herbert for he was very much aware of his endeavour to spread Vedantic thought in the West: "En Occident, Jean Herbert, avec une activité remarquable et un zèle passionné, répand, par ses publications de Vivekananda, la pensée Ramakrishniste."[43] In March 1938, when the Ramakrishna Mission sent Swami Siddheswarananda to France as its first representative to found a Vedantic Centre in that country, it was again Jean Herbert who took him to Rolland, the man who contributed to this new direction of the Indian institution. Being aware of the mutual prejudices causing misunderstandings in both East and West, Rolland did his best to bring closer "l'esprit de l'Europe de celui de l'Asie."[84] It was naturally with a sense of pride therefore that he noted the following paragraph from the Swami's credential:

> We are specially gratified that you are going by invitation to France, which we have learnt to love not merely as country whose culture displays some of the fine elements and attributes of modern European civilization, but also as the home of that great experiment of the Ramakrishna Idea of life and religion, M. Romain Rolland.[85]

This is part of Rolland's mission which was aimed at uniting "tous les peuples et toutes les pensées."[86]

In December the same year Herbert paid Rolland yet another visit before leaving for India where his wife was doing some research work for her book on Sister Nivedita, the personal friend of Vivekananda. Three years later Rolland and the scholar were to meet again for conversations on Indian thought. In addition to the serious talks, Rolland was delighted to learn that Swami Siddheswarananda had started giving lectures on Shankara, the celebrated Indian philosopher, at the Université de Montpellier; that Mme. Herbert was about to publish her work on Sister Nivedita and above all that M. Herbert himself had "rassemblé la collection la plus compléte de Ramakrishna, et il leur restitue leur verdeur native, que ses disciples voilent pudiquement."[47] Evidently, Rolland was far from losing interest in India and Indian thought even during the closing years of his life. His keen interest in Herbert's findings only three years before his death is a good proof of his ever earnest desire to explore Indian thought.

Long before Romain Rolland met Jean Herbert, he had received a pleasant surprise from a friend of the latter who was also a well-known orientalist. That man was Professor Paul Masson-Oursel of the Faculté des Lettres de Paris et des Hautes Etudes and the surprise was a gift of his two major works, namely, *Philosophie Comparée* and *Esquisse d'une Histoire de la Philosophie Indienne*. In his letter of October 22, 1923, the author informed Rolland that in these works he had tried by way of comparison, to get a better understanding of his own culture and to look at it more objectively. It was with some satisfaction that Rolland noted that these works "élargissent enfin les horizons d'esprit de la Sorbonne"[48] and they were most probably the first works on Indian thought in French he was glad to receive shortly after he had published his work on Gandhi. The usefulness of the works to Rolland manifested itself some five years later when he started the preparation of his own works on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. In his homage to Rolland in 1945, Masson-Oursel speaking of the former as a friend of India, said:

> Des admirateurs de Romain Rolland, aucun n'ignore avec quelle sympathie ardente il a recueilli dans l'enseignement de Ramakrishna et de Vivekananda le message de l'Inde au monde moderne. Mais peu de gens savent avec quelle touchante gratitude le nom de Romain Rolland est vénéré là-bas."

Gandhi

It is almost impossible to talk of Romain Rolland's relationship with Gandhi without recalling the joy and enthusiasm with which the French writer welcomed the Gandhian thought in the early 1920's. Reminiscing about those years of Gandhian influence he wrote:

> Mais à l'époque que je décris (1922-1927), j'étais encore dans la période d'incertitude et d'examen passionné. Je sentais venir la 'Tempête sur l'Europe'. Je la flairais, dans l'air, de mes naseaux fiévreux. Et je cherchais - bien moins pour moi: (à soixante ans, l'on est près de la porte de sortie) que pour ceux que j'aime, pour notre Occident, quel refuge, quel rempart lui opposer.
>
> C'est alors que je vis surgir, des plaines de l'Indus, la *Burg* de l'âme, qu'avait bâtie le frêle et imbrisable Mahâtmâ. Et je m'efforçais de la reconstruire en Europe. Sa revendication de la *still voice* était parente de celle de *Clérambault*. Elle y mettait le sceau de la vie vécue - (de la vertu dans les livres, on était las!) - d'une vie pure et héroique, qui, par son exemple de sacrifice, entraînait tout un peuple à sa suite.
>
> La grande influence qui domina, dans ces années, mon esprit, a été celle de Gandhi."

Having never been able to meet the Mahatma in India because of the poor health of his aging father, he invited the Indian leader to Switzerland.

When in the early morning of Friday September 11, 1931, Gandhi, Andrews, Miss Madeleine Slade and some Indian friends stepped off the "Rajputana" at the Marseille harbour, their joy would have certainly been great if they were welcomed by Romain Rolland, the son of France who had seen in Gandhi "la voix et la conscience la plus haute... non seulement de l'Inde mais de l'Europe".[1] Rolland who for a long time had been looking forward to meeting his Indian friend, had planned to go to Marseille with his sister but it was unfortunate indeed that a bad cold had forced him to stay in bed. However, he was able to write a message of welcome which Madeleine Rolland gave to Gandhi when she was introduced to him by Andrews and Miss Slade. As far as the French writer was concerned, he was going to see his Indian friend two months later for the latter had planned to attend the Round Table Conference in London before going to Villeneuve. Meanwhile the French writer was out of patience and decided to correspond with the visitor. "Quantité de lettres et de télégrammes échangés avec Londres, par l'intermédiaire de Mira"[2] he noted in his diary. The importance of that epistolary exchange is twofold - first, we have Rolland's confession of his being guided by Gandhi's thought:

> Cette vie (la mienne) a été singulièrement mêlée, troublée, par tous les vents; ceux du dehors - ceux du dedans. Ce n'est qu'à force de volonté que j'y ai maintenu la route droite de ma frêle barque, assaillie de tous les côtes, et suspendue entre les deux abîmes de Pascal: le Rien, le Tout, - qui sont peut-être les deux forces de l'Un. Dans cette tragique traversée, - je me suis guidé sur les étoiles, dont la lumière traversait les nuées. Mahatmaji a été l'une d'elles.[3]

Secondly, his deep thought concerning the European crisis of the time and his decision to express that thought in a letter was dictated by the strong feeling that the slowness of the London Conference might make a tête-à-tête between him and Gandhi impossible. Fortunately for the two eminent men, their dream materialized and finally they met on Sunday, December 6, 1931. The following day being Gandhi's "Silence Day", no conversation was possible. However, the Mahatma was so keenly interested in what Rolland had to tell him that he was prepared to listen to the latter and take notes. Rolland talked about social justice and Russia, Italian fascism, and Gandhi's projected visit to Rome. He tried to convince his distinguished visitor of the necessity of fighting capitalism and fascism for the betterment of humanity's future. He stressed the fact that innocent Tagore fell a victim to a deceit and was exploited by the fascist régime during his stay in Italy. Obviously, his aim was to warn Gandhi of the fascist manoeuverings.

The following day the Italian question was given priority by Gandhi. He made it clear to Rolland that the main purpose of his visit to Rome was to meet the Pope who had sent him a message; to meet Mussolini and to offer his message of peace to the Italians. Rolland was finally successful in convincing him that he should be extremely careful in order not to fall into the hands of the fascists.

The Russian experiment which seemed more attractive to Rolland than capitalism, did not appeal to Gandhi who believed it would ultimately lead a country like India to extreme intolerance.

While Rolland saw little hope for non-violence in Europe, Gandhi, on the contrary, was hopeful:

> From what I have seen of Europe, I believe that Europe cannot avoid the need for non-violence. Luckily no extensive organization is necessary; all that is required is one man who will be faith and non-violence incarnate. Until that man appears you must wait, hope and prepare the atmosphere.[14]

There was no doubt in Rolland's mind that non-violence could succeed in India, a country which had "un milieu déjà préparé à la recevoir, - un peuple religieux, habitué depuis des siècles à l'Ahimsa."[15] But in Europe there was nothing like that, he believed. In other words, he was convinced that the European soil was definitely not a fertile one for non-violence. His explanation speaks for itself:

> De petits îlots d'ahimsa, très clairsemés, en pays anglo-saxons, tchèques, slaves, presque inexistants en pays latins. Le sentiment religieux n'est pas en cause. Il y en a beaucoup en Occident: mais il a presque partout le caractère de combat, - 'église militante'. Les livres saints sont déformés par les Etats ecclésiastiques et d'ailleurs leur texte n'est pas assez précis; il a prêté à de scandaleuses controverses pendant la guerre. Surtout l'esprit d'Occident est de nature pratique, à courte vue, à échéances rapprochées.[16]

Lala Lajpat Rai, the Indian political leader, had shared this view but Gandhi's deep conviction had always been that non-violence has a universal relevance and his conclusion was one full of hope: "After having seen the difficulties, after yesterday's conversation, it remains my faith that non-violence alone can save Europe."[17] Rolland was not prepared to share this view and the discussion on this topic went on for a rather long time after the visit. For a time he hesitated between non-violence and violence; now praising the former "notre méthode consiste à encourager tous les moyens possibles de lutte non-violente."[98] then approving the use of the latter in the fight against capitalism and fascism: "Le temps n'est plus à tergiverser. Ou pour ou contre! Les discussions académiques sur la violence ou la non-violence ne sont plus de saison...Tout doit avoir place dans l'armée."[99] But his final word on the question seems to be in favour of the use of both: "Tout peut et doit servir dans le combat commun: la violence et la non-violence."[100] This was going to be the firm belief of Rolland henceforth. When the Second World War broke out, he did not hesitate to join the fellow pacifists like Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell and others in their support for the Allies' decision to participate in the war. Having foreseen the coming of the catastrophe for a long time, he did not leave a stone unturned in his attempt to avert it but when it came he found no better solution than the use of violence to stop it. He was then far from abandoning his belief that violence was evil but that evil had become a necessity to fight a greater one.

The whole question of violence and non-violence showed the intransigence of Gandhi, ever committed to his doctrine and the impatience of Rolland with passive pacifists. For the latter, it was imperative to act: "Le point essentiel n'est pas 'violence ou non-violence'. Il est 'Agir'."[101] and later the same year he was more specific by showing his impatience with Gandhi himself:

> Je souhaite...que la pensée sociale de Gandhi se précise de plus en plus. L'heure approche où, dans le monde entier, il faudra prendre parti pour l'un ou l'autre des deux camps ou bien se retirer de l'action politique dans la forêt...[102]

A justification for this impatience is to be found in his doubts about the success of non-violence outside India - doubts he made clear to Gandhi thus:

> La grande expérience du Satyagraha que vous accomplissez, et dont l'issue est encore incertaine, a, j'espère, de fortes chances pour se réaliser dans l'Inde. Elle n'en a aucume, dans l'Europe d'à présent.[103]

Following the discussion on the question of violence and non-violence, Gandhi spent one afternoon in Lausanne where he was interviewed at three meetings. Due to his cold, Rolland stayed home but did not miss all. The second of these meetings, being public, was broadcast by the Swiss National Radio and therefore accessible to Rolland and his wife, Marie, the present host of the Romain Archives in Paris. The first and second meetings were devoted to the question of "Theory and Practice of Non-Violence" and Gandhi explained what he meant by refusal to do military service and non-cooperation with the State to an audience which for years had been traditionally loyal to the State and consequently quite shocked.

Of great spiritual significance was the discussion of the third meeting held in a church. It centered on Gandhi's concept of God as Truth. The Mahatma pointed out that though according to Hindu Scriptures, God has a thousand names and forms, it is believed that God is nameless and formless. But his own concept of God is the conclusion he reached after a ceaseless search for truth:

> When I came to study Islam, I saw that Islam too had many names for God. With those who say that God is Love, I too say that God is Love. But in my heart I thought that though God may be Love, God is, above all, Truth. If it is possible for human language to give its complete description of God, my conclusion is that for me, God is Truth. But two years ago I made a step further, to say that Truth is God. I came to this conclusion after an incessant search for truth which began about fifty years ago.[104]

Though satisfied, the audience wanted to know more and asked him to define "Truth". He admitted that the question was a difficult one to answer. However, he pleased everybody with his own concept formed after personal experience:

> A difficult question. But I have solved it for myself by saying that it is what the inner voice tells me. You will ask: 'How is it that different people think different and contrary truth?' - Well, we see that the human spirit works through innumerable media, and that the evolution of the human mind is not the same for all men. It follows that what may be truth for one man is non-truth for another.[105]

To those who have an earnest desire to know Truth he had the following advice to offer:

> ...all I can say to you in all true humility is that truth cannot be found by anyone who has not achieved an abundant sense of humility. If you want to swim in the bottom of the Ocean of Truth, you must reduce yourself to zero.[106]

It is hardly surprising that this Gandhian concept of Truth as God had provoked in Rolland the desire to reveal to his distinguished guest his own feeling about truth. After having examined his own conscience, he recognized that since childhood he had considered being true to oneself as being of vital importance for it constituted the very foundation on which everything else was built. He also found out that there are two kinds of truth, namely, truth to oneself and truth to others. He confessed that his greatest difficulty in life was to give full expression to the second kind of truth - a difficulty which Tolstoy, too, had experienced. Considering Gandhi's concept, he pointed out that if Truth is God, then, "elle manque d'un attribut bien important de Dieu: la Joie"[107] and he insisted that he could not conceive of a God without joy. That joy he had discovered in beauty to which he attached great importance. By beauty, he meant"l'art vrai et la beauté saine",[108] and his definition of art is:

> Le grand art a pour essence l'harmonie; et il donne la paix, la santé, l'équilibre à l'âme. Il les communique à la fois par l'esprit: car les uns et l'autre ont droit à la joie.[109]

This brings us to the question of art as seen by the two men. True to the Tolstoyan view, both were categorically against the concept of "Art for art's sake" and both agreed that the main task of an artist was to express truth. Furthermore, Gandhi specified that his own definition of truth was a universal one and that an art that does not go hand in hand with truth is no true art. To be more specific he explained:

> By truth in art I do not mean the exact reproduction of exterior objects; it is the living object which brings living joy to the soul and which must elevate the soul. If a work does not achieve this, it is worthless. If truth does not bring joy, it is because truth is not in you...''[8]

Obviously, the two men differ very little in their respective definition of art and still less in their taste for European music as we shall see.

Following the serious discussion on art and truth, Gandhi asked Rolland to play for his Indian friends. Remembering the fact that it was Miss Slade's interest in Beethoven that had led her to Rolland, he requested the music of that great composer. After playing the Andante of the Fifth Symphony, the French musicologist satisfied Gandhi's second request by playing the scene of the Elysian Fields of Gluck's Orphée. The choice of those particular pieces of musical composition was hardly a random one for both had a heroic theme and the musicologist knew, more than anybody else, that he had to play for the great hero of modern India.

Friday, December 11, was departure day for Gandhi and his companions, but the Indian leader made it a point to meet Rolland soon after breakfast for further talks on topics as varied as the Italian invitation and fascists' exploitation of intellectuals; Oxford University in whose beauty Gandhi saw the fruit of exploitation and the slums of London which Miss Lester had shown to the Indian visitor to give him an idea of poverty in England but where the latter was shocked to notice that some of the supposedly poor inhabitants had even a piano. Rolland's description of the genuine poverty of the Parisian slums was more convincing to Gandhi. The topic on which Rolland had set his heart for ever - the condition of the working class - was discussed seriously as each man tried to assert his views. The possibility of antagonism between capital and labour was not dismissed by Gandhi but he strongly believed that it is possible to bring about harmony between them. To Gandhi "labour is the only power in the world."[111] for he was convinced that if workers are well organized and united they can exert an influence on their employers and assert their rights by non-violent means such as persuasion and arbitration - means which, on his suggestion, the textile workers of Ahmedabad used successfully in 1918. Rolland did not disagree but was very pessimistic about the effectiveness of the idea. He thought that due to human weakness, workers cannot be truly united for the differences dividing them are fostered by the capitalists: "Dans la réalité, les travailleurs ne font pas l'union: car les capitalists intriguent; ils sèment les divisions; il achètent les jeunes."[112] Under such circumstances, explained Rolland, the minority of workers who are cautious enough not to fall victims to the capitalists' intrigues have no choice but to force the poor masses to unite in order to produce a dictatorship of a conscious proletariat in the interest of the masses concerned. In this idea Gandhi saw an usurpation of Capital by Labour and as such it was totally unacceptable to him. According to him, the solution is to be found in the unity and independence of the workers and not in violent means:

> The workers' task is to become independent and able to dictate their conditions when there is not a surplus of labour. As to blacklegs, we try to take command over foreign labour as well. Labour has its process of evolution, as does everything else, and I have no desire to interrupt it by introducing the disturbing factor of violence.[113]

Rolland was simply not inclined to accept this Gandhian solution for, undoubtedly, he was more aware of the complexity of the European situation than his Indian friend.

Gandhi was against the use of violence in the treatment of criminals and the mentally sick. He believed that criminals are produced by modern society and that the root of the evil is "the race for profit, competition and forced levelling ('the destruction of distances')".[114] The solution to this problem, he suggested, was the reorganization of society with the help of specialists to deal with all sorts of crime and the mentally sick.

Erich Schramm, a German teacher of religion, had sent Rolland some questions concerning Gandhi's concept of God, his opinion on Christians and on an organization for universal humanitarianism. Answering these questions, Gandhi pointed out that God is not a spiritual personality but rather "an immutable law. And in this case the law and its Maker are one."[115] By 'law' he meant "the living law. That is what God is. And this law does not change; it is eternal."[116] Of Christianity and Christians, he felt that

"Christianity is good, but the Christians are bad."[117] True to his lack of faith in organizations because "people in these organizations are either simpletons, or charlatans speculating on apparently praiseworthy objects",[118] he would therefore not join anyone of them even if its aim was to promote universal humanitarianism.

It was on that negative note that Gandhi's one-week stay in Villeneuve ended. However, it would be quite erroneous to conclude that Gandhi and Rolland parted as they met with a wide gulf separating them. During that memorable week, Rolland had all the time he needed to discuss various topics. Evidently, he had some reservations about several of Gandhi's ideas on such topics as nationalism, non-violence and Labour-Capital relations. On the other hand, Gandhi could not accept Rolland's international approach to politics. At the time when Rolland was still preparing his book on Gandhi, he wrote to Dilip Kumar Roy about the lack of internationalism in Gandhi's approach to politics and pointed out that: "The Mahatma is indeed wonderful...The only thing I object to in him is that his outlook is not international but national".[119] But neither this national outlook nor any other ideological differences between the two men was going to affect the unshakeable faith they had in each other till the end. Evidently, their meeting did not completely bridge the gulf separating them since the beginning. Mutual respect for their respective ideals and their commitment to the panhumanistic confraternity had cemented their friendship for ever. The greatest significance of that friendship to Rolland was undoubtedly Gandhi's willingness to share his experience with truth. Once the latter was convinced of the universal nature of truth, he never doubted for a moment of its being the fundamental basis of life. The French writer, too, had his experience with truth and it manifests itself in his *Jean-Christophe* where we find his Olivier going out to conquer truth:

> Mais je ne suis pas de l'armée de la force. Je suis de l'armée de l'esprit; avec des milliers de frères, j'y représente la France. Que César conquière la terre, s'il veut! Nous conquérons la vérité.[120]

Indeed, for Olivier who is obviously a living symbol of peace, life itself is truth. For the victory-thirsty Christophe, it is truth that is life:

> La vérité, c'est la vie. Ce n'est pas dans votre tête que vous devez la chercher. C'est dans les coeurs de autres. Unissez-vous à eux. Pensez tout ce que vous voudrez, mais prenez chaque jour un bain d'humanité.[121]

Rolland's search for truth is again obvious in *Clérambault* and, of course, in *L'Ame Enchantée*, where he not only refers to his own experience with truth since childhood, but also to the concept of Mahatma Gandhi, "La *still voice* de l'âme éternelle, fille de dieu."[122] while advising his proud, ambitious, victory-thirsty young Marc: "*Votre* vérité est *votre* nature. Ne trahissez, ne violentez pas votre nature, en épousant celle d'un autre!"[123] and when the latter comes to his senses and realizes that he has to be true to himself, Rolland rejoices:

> Quoi qu'il en fût, merci à ceux qui lui parlaient selon la loi, la loi unique de vérité! Car il comprenait maintenant, mieux que jamais, que cette loi était la sienne: c'était sa mission d'être vrai. Souffrir, errer, se contredire, même tomber et se souiller mais être vrai! On se relevra. On se lavera. Une âme vraie ne peut pas être damnée. Le ver de la mort ne peut ronger l'incorruptible vérité. Et le coeur de Marc se gonflait à la pensée que cette loi propre de vérité, dont sa nature était marquée, était aussi, sans qu'il l'eût su, le noyau de l'âme de ce Gandhi, vers qui un instinct aveugle de défense l'avait poussé, - bien qu'il ne dût pas suivre la même voie. (Je lui avais révélé le Credo du petit homme frêle et imbrisable, qui conduisait trois cent millions d'hommes: - 'La Vérité est Dieu...''[34]

In Gandhi's opinion, the Ramakrishna Mission was a useful institution but he believed that it would have become more relevant to Ramkrishna's broadness of heart if it were more involved in social and political activities instead of concentrating on a few social works. Gandhi did not know Ramakrishna but he did try to meet his faithful disciple, Vivekananda after his South African mission. Unfortunately he was not lucky - Vivekananda was not at his Ashram (monastery) and they never met.

The question of Untouchables was dealt with and Gandhi made it clear to Rolland that it was a stigma on the face of India that his movement was trying to eradicate. But Gandhi was against the emancipation of those Untouchables who were claiming special privileges in the future Indian constitution. The leader and his movement stood for absolute equality for all Indians regardless of castes and outcasts.

Gandhi's views on illness must have shocked Rolland. The Mahatma believed that man has made a fetish of illness and worries too much about it instead of facing it with courage. To fight illness, he prescribed a simple life, elementary hygiene for everybody and his motto was "a healthy mind leads to a health body".[125] That was the conclusion Gandhi reached after thirty years of experience.

When in February 1939, Professor S. Radhakrishnan, the famous Indian philosopher wrote to Romain Rolland from Oxford and requested him to collaborate in a book of tribute to Gandhi on the seventieth anniversary of birth of the Mahatma, the French writer responded wholeheartedly. His glowing tribute to the man who, right from the beginning had been for him "l'homme qui s'est fait un avec l'Etre de l'univers",[126] reveals the great respect he had for that extraordinary man and his achievement. Telling us about the man and what he meant to India, he wrote:

> Gandhi n'est pas seulement pour l'Inde un héros de l'histoire nationale, dont le souvenir légendaire s'incorporera dans l'épopée millénaire. Il n'a pas été seulement l'esprit de vie agissante, qui a soufflé dans les peuples de l'Inde la fière conscience de leur unité, de leur puissance, et la volonté de leur indépendance. Il a renouvelé pour tous les peuples d'Occident le message du Christ, oublié ou trahi. Il a inscrit son nom parmi les sages et les saints de l'humanité; et le rayonnement de sa figure a pénétré toutes les régions de la terre.[127]

This praise comes not from a man who had met the great Mahatma but once in his life; it comes from an already established writer who was "l'un des premiers, en Occident, à découvrir et faire entendre la Parole du Mahatma."[128] Indeed, the sincerity of Rolland in his relationship with Gandhi was unquestionable and so was the latter's faithfulness towards the former. Recalling his visit at Villeneuve in a letter to Madeleine Rolland, Gandhi wrote:

> I have been trying to find out a suitable adjective for your brother. To write of him to you as 'Mons. Rolland' or as 'your brother' sounds too prosaic and distant. To describe him as simple 'brother' is too familiar and does not convey adequately the existing relationship. The two words that come to me are 'Rishi' or 'the Sage'. They are almost synonymous terms but not identical in meaning. Subject therefore to his and your approval, I am going henceforth to describe him as 'Rishi'.[129]

When in December 1944, Gandhi learned that his French "Rishi" died, he remarked: "He truly lived in his many and nameless deeds... He lived truth and non-violence as he saw and believed them from time to time."[130] Thus the two men saw each other in terms of each other's great personality and remarkable achievement. It is undeniable that their meeting was a historic one. Horace Alexander, author of Gandhi Through Western Eyes, does justice to both men when he points out that:

> In a sane world, Gandhi's visit to Rome could be ignored and the visit he paid to Romain Rolland in Switzerland and the conversations that those two remarkable men had together would figure as the truly historic part of his journey across Europe.[131]

Romain Rolland's Contacts with India: Final Remarks

The discovery of India through books and regular correspondence, through the medium of Indian and European travellers, and through vital discussions with such eminent personalities as Tagore, Nehru, Gandhi, Lajpat Rai, Bose, Roy, Mukerji, Nag and a host of other intellectuals who had made Olga villa, the residence of the French "Rishi" at Villeneuve a meeting place of Asian pilgrims, is in many ways a feat when we consider the fact that Rolland was never able to visit the land of his dream which to him was, above all, "cette chaude terre, brûlante matrice des Dieux".[132] To several of his friends he talked about his dream of visiting India, the land whence came to him two 'lights': Gandhi and Tagore: "Mais que ces deux lumières nous viennent en même temps de l'Inde, quelle fortune morale pour un peuple! L'Europe n'a rien de pareil à lui opposer..."[133] When Tagore invited him to visit his World University in 1923, he enthusiastically planned for a trip to India which had already fascinated him:

> Si pourtant ma présence pouvait vous être utile en quelque chose, j'aimerais à venir passer un peu de temps à Santiniketan. Ce ne serait pas en tout cas cette année, mais peut-être à l'automne ou l'hiver de 1923, si toutefois ma santé assez chancelante, me le permettait. Je réaliserais ainsi un des rêves de ma vie.[134]

A year after he had written these words to Tagore, his enthusiasm was still as great though he had to postpone his projected visit:

> Je projette même un voyage dans l'Inde où Tagore m'invite à venir passer un hiver dans son Santiniketan, au Bengale; mais ma santé m'oblige sans doute à le remettre à l'année prochaine. L'Inde m'attire fort: j'y ai nombre d'amis, dont j'aime et admire la vive intelligence, la vaste culture, et une ferveur morale, qu'on ne trouve guère en

Europe.'[35]

It was unfortunate indeed that his cherished dream never came true due to either his old father's poor health or his own vulnerable health. It is hard to estimate the good that such a visit would have done to the man who had already proved to be one of the greatest friends of India in the West. But one thing could have been realised: had his project materialised he would have added another volume to his Indian writings - a biography of Tagore no doubt:

> Chère amie, vous me demandez pourquoi je n'écris pas un 'Tagore'? - C'est un de mes voeux. Pour le réaliser, je voudrais aller dans l'Inde, vivre quelques mois - ou quelques semaines - auprès du poète. Car on n'écrit pas un 'Tagore', comme on écrit un 'Gandhi'. C'est infiniment plus complexe et plus riche de pensée, et aussi plus indien. Il faut pouvoir se pénétrer de l'atmosphère intime de l'âme - et du milieu. Puisse le sort me permettre de faire ce voyage et ce séjour là-bas, auprès du Voyant mélodieux.'[36]

Not having been able to visit Tagore in India, he had at least the satisfaction to witness his other dream - the reconciliation of the poet and the Mahatma. To him that event was historically significant:

> La rencontre de ces deux hommes, - Tagore vieux, malade, chancelant, qui a traversé toute l'Inde, pour se trouver au chevet de Gandhi se sacrifiant, à deux doigts de l'issue fatale, et les deux hommes s'unissant en cette prière c'est un des plus beaux tableaux de l'histoire.'[37]

That the first-hand impressions which necessarily result from seeing a new land and from exposing oneself to a new culture would have enhanced his view of India and her people, is quite possible; and that such impressions add authenticity to one's judgement is equally true. As a judge of the men and of the facts he came across in his life, Rolland was evidently not an ordinary person: "Des illusions j'en avais peut-être, dans la sphère métaphysique. Mais aucune sur le terrain des hommes et des faits.[138] As we have seen in our survey of his personal contacts and correspondence with Indian intellectuals and Europeans interested in India, he did rely almost entirely on "des hommes et des faits" for his discovery of India. It would be utterly wrong to believe that it was personal interest that set him on that voyage of discovery. The aim of that voyage to which he had devoted a good part of his lifetime, is to be seen in the context of his idea of a Pan-Humanist brotherhood which was dear to his heart since the very beginning of his literary career. As a matter of fact, it would be just to point out that the dominent theme of his major works such as Jean-Christophe and L'Ame Enchantée is the reconciliation of mankind. In his tribute to Gandhi on the occasion of the latter's seventieth birthday anniversary he alluded to that theme clearly:

> Et nous intellectuels, hommes de science, hommes de lettres, artistes, nous qui travaillons aussi, dans la mesure de nos faibles forces, à préparer pour cette Cité de tous les hommes où règne la trêve de Dieu, nous qui sommes le tiers ordre (comme on dit en langue d'église), et qui appartenons à la confrérie Panhumaniste, - nous adressons notre fervent hommage d'amour et de vénération au maître et frère Gandhi, qui réalise, par le coeur et par l'action, notre idéal de l'humanité à venir.[139]

Seen in this context, this voyage of discovery was not only a rewarding one but also a significant part of his task of bringing about the reconciliation of mankind - a task to which he dedicated his life. One may say that his discovery of India was evidently an interesting and useful one.

1 Romain Rolland, *Le Voyage Intérieur*, (Paris: Albin Michel, 1942), p. 62.

Journey Within, trans. Elsie Pell (New York: Philosophical Library, 1947), p. 33.

> "...at all times affirmed his brotherly affection for the German, the Englishman and for the entire universe, should have been planted by his race, centuries ago, in the very heart of Central France,".

2 Romain Rolland, Introduction to *The Dance of Shiva*, Ananda Coomaraswamy (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1948), p. 5.

3 Romain Rolland, *Jean-Christophe*, (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1954), p. 1027.

John Christopher, Volume III, Part VII "The House", trans. Gilbert Cannan (London: Calder and Boyars Jupiter Books, 1961), p. 365.

> "The West is burning away...Soon...Very soon...I see other stars arising in the furthest depths of the East."

4 Romain Rolland, "Par-delà", *Quadrige*, No. 2 (Août-Septembre 1945), p. 8. (Written in 1926 and destined to be a chapter entitled "L'Oeil" of his *Le Voyage Intérieur* but was not published.)

> "The decline of Europe against which the energy of Christophe, in a final jump, reacts in the crystal sight of the disillusioned Olivier. I have struggled along with Christophe against the fate that I could see coming. And I have appealed to the young generations to join the struggle. Hope persisted till the fatal year which sealed the destiny of the West: 1914. The year of the battle which mowed down my young brothers, my spiritual sons, Europe in bloom."

5 Romain Rolland, *L'Esprit Libre*, (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1953), p. 233.

The Forerunners, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1920), p. 60.

> "At a meeting of Methodist ministers in New York, one of them, a pastor from Bridgeport, Connecticut, straightforwardly declared, 'If I must choose between my country and my God, I have made up my mind to choose God.' He was hooted and threatened by the other members of the assembly, five hundred in number; was denounced as a traitor."

6 Romain Rolland, Letter to Jean Herbert, June 1937, in

Inde: Journal 1915-1943 (Bale: Editions Vineta, 1951), p. 398.

> "Too often, in the course of history of both yesterday and to-day, the principle of the heads of the Church has been and is to side with every power which is victorious, provided that that power saves the privileges of their Church. Thus, they take part in the injustice established by force."

7 Edward Sapir, "'Jean-Christophe': An Epic of Humanity", The Dial, LXII, No. 742 (May, 1917), pp. 423-426.

8 Romain Rolland, Au-dessus de la Mélée, (Paris: Librairie Paul Ollendorff, 1915), p. 114.
Above the Battle, trans. C.K. Ogden (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1916), p. 142.

> "While the war tempest rages, uprooting the strongest souls and dragging them along in its furious cyclone, I continue my humble pilgrimage, trying to discover beneath the ruins the rare hearts who have remained faithful to the old ideal of human fraternity. What a sad joy I have in collecting and helping them!
>
> "I know that each of their efforts - like mine - that each of their words of love, rouses and turns against them the hostility of the two hostile camps. The combatants, pitted against each other, agree in hating those who refuse to hate. Europe is like a besieged town. Fever is raging. Whoever will not rave like the rest is suspected. And in these hurried times when justice cannot wait to study evidence, every suspect is a traitor. Whoever insists, in the midst of war, on defending peace among men, knows that he risks his own peace, his reputation, his friends, for his belief. But of what value is a belief for which no risks are run?"

9 Romain Rolland, letter to Sofia Bertolini Guerrieri-Gonzaga, February 3, 1916, in Chère Sofia, cahier 11 (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1960), pp. 239-240.

> "I do not believe that the word of the future belongs to Christianism; I believe in it less than never before after this crime, - whatever love I have for Christ: - every ancient religion has revealed too much its inability to oppose harmful forces; the best that it has been able to do has been to learn to support them loftily and reconcile itself to them. It is not enough. They (ancient religions) have signed their renunciation act. Humanity needs benevolent forces, which are (in the non-negative sense) more positive and less uncertain."

10 Romain Rolland, letter to Professor D.B. Kalelkar, March 17, 1927, in *Inde: Journal 1915-1943*, p. 153.
Romain Rolland and Gandhi Correspondence (Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1976), p. 83.

> "National pride, in Europe, against which I have spent my life fighting, is such a terrible scourge that I see its shadow everywhere and wherever I see it showing itself I am on my guard."

11 Romain Rolland, *Le Cloître de la Rue d'Ulm* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1952, p. 292.

> "The most admirable in Buddhistic art: this ingenious expression of suavity, of peaceful, concentrated love, of calm renunciation, of divine torpor.
>
> What is left to me of that rapid and diffuse visit is the impression of the unity of the human mind. From one end of the world to the other, men are brothers."

12 Ibid., p. 47.

> "has completely lost his pagan pantheism of the Renaissance to reach the Buddhistic mysticism of Romain Rolland."

13 Ibid., p. 323.

> "the musical Buddha with a revolutionary mysticity."

14 Jean Biès, *Littérature Française et Pensée Hindoue Des Origines à 1950* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1973), p. 358.

> "And yet, since the awakening of his eager curiosity, the young Romain Rolland discovers at the Normale Supérieure, where he stays from 1886 to 1889, the translation by Burnouf of the Indian epics; reads and annotates a few passages of the *Bhagavad Gita*, which, as an admirer of the Trinacrian, he compares to a 'Volcano', - and of which, after long years, he will find some passages again on the verso of a page of *Danton*."

15 Romain Rolland, *Jean-Christophe* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1954), pp. 1071-1072.
Franklin Egerton, trans., *The Bhagavad Gita* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964), p. 13.

Therefore arise, son of Kunti,
   Unto battle, making a firm resolve.
Holding pleasure and pain alike,

Gain and loss, victory and defeat,
Then gird thyself for battle..."

16 Ibid., p. 20.
"For Me, son of Prtha, there is nothing to be done
In the three worlds whatsoever,
Nothing unattained to be attained;
And yet I still continue in action.
For if I did not continue
At all in action, unwearied,
My path (would) follow
Men altogether, son of Prtha.
These folk would perish
If I did not perform action,
And I should be an agent of confusion;
I should destroy these creatures."

17 Romain Rolland, Jean-Christophe, p. 1004. Gilbert Cannan, trans., Jean-Christophe, Volume 3, Part VII, "The House" (London: Calder and Boyars, Jupiter Books, 1966), p. 343.

"And the old man, who was considered prosaic and dry of heart, and nearing the end of his life, used to say to himself the bitter and tender words of a Brahmin of India:

'The poisoned tree of the world put two fruits sweeter than the waters of the fountain of life: one is poetry, the other, friendship'."

18 Romain Rolland, letter to Sofia Bertolini Guerrieri-Gonzaga, December 27, 1917, in Chère Sofia, Cahier 11 (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1960), p. 266.

"...You always hear people talk about the century of Pericles, of the century of Leo the tenth, of the century of Louis the fourteenth: there would be many reservations to object to these as far as golden ages are concerned; and, as for me, I would not have liked to live in those centuries more than in the present century. But why do we no hear people talk about some blooming ages of the human soul which are really fairy? One of those which attract me the most, since I have read passages of the most ancient Hindu chronicle, is the great Buddhistic era in Ceylon. At that time, pure Buddhism reigned, for several centuries, in splendid towns (to-day buried under tropical vegetation), towns with golden roofs, radiant with art, faith and religious love for all beings not only human, but living. Then the most beautiful religious dream of humanity came true, in a scenery of A Thousand and one Nights."

19 Ibid.

> "We do not know Asia enough. Our feverish thought lives shut up in its European ant-hill, where myriads of beasts move about without advancing on a soil eroded to the bones. - The time when the sources of Asia will open again for the regeneration of the human soul, is approaching."

20 Ananda Coomaraswamy, "A world policy for India", *The New Age*, XVI, No. 8 (December 24, 1914), pp. 192-193.

21 Ananda Coomaraswamy, op. cit.

22 Romain Rolland, letter to Sofia Bertolini Guerrieri-Gonzaga, February 16, 1915, in *Chère Sofia*, Cahier 11 (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1960), pp. 226-227.

> I have received an excellent article that was dedicated to me, by one of the most intelligent Hindus of to-day (an article in English). He judges with serenity, proud pity, this bankruptcy of Europe which has crushed his people, and against which he feels no hostile sentiment but only the wish that powerless Christianism strengthens itself at the sources of the great and pure thought of Asia."

23 Romain Rolland, letter to Alphonse de Cháteaubriant, February 17, 1915, (Unpublished letter, available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris.)

> And as if this boiling of the nations of the West was not enough, yet, here comes the East to me. A great Hindu,...has, since, in reply to the letters I wrote to him sent me other books, among others a work of his, *The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon* whose illustrations have thrown me into an abyss of ecstasy.
>
> I feel that my mission is to unite all the nations and all thoughts. And I believe that this battle where they all clash, works with us in it."

24 Romain ROlland, *Le Périple* (Paris: Editions Emile-Paul Frères, 1946), pp. 120-121.

> "But in the same article, for the first time, my hand was held out towards Tagore, the bearer of the light of Asia. And that hand was seized by Tagore and Asia. Reconstruction, by the side of ruin. Not a day without the hope for revival!...The sun was once again appearing in the East. What a splendid dawn already in the speech of the seer of India whose prophecy of the fall of the '*cannibal*' idol I had but quoted: the false civilization of Europe! Destiny was on the march. But the destruction which

was coming under the dancing feet of Shiva was no longer nothingness: it was resurrection...'Ego sum Mors et Vita...' The harmonious speech of Tagore was, by no means, singing the vengeance of Asia and its domination on ruined Europe, but (in that same Tokyo speech) the regeneration of Europe by Asia, and of Asia by Europe, the beauty of their union for the glory of man. I was reaching the same goal, by my French ways. And we met. And we recognized each other."

25 Rabindranath Tagore, Creative Unity (London: Macmilland and Co., Limited, 1922), p. 111.

26 Romain Rolland, letter to Rabindranath Tagore, April 10, 1919, in Rabindranath Tagore and Romain Rolland, Cahier 12 (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1961), p. 21.

> "...If you could recruit for us, in India, in Japan, and in China, a few names, I would be personally grateful to you. I would like that henceforth the minds of Asia take a more and more regular part in the manifestations of the thought of Europe. My dream would be that one day we may see the union of the two hemispheres of the mind; and I admire you for having contributed to it more than anyone else."

27 Rabindranath Tagore, letter to Romain Rolland, June 24, 1919, in Rabindranath Tagore and Romain Rolland, p. 26.

> "The truths that save us have always been uttered by a minority and rejected by the majority, and have yet triumphed in spite of their insufficiencies. I need only know that the most elevated conscience of Europe has been able to affirm itself above the ugly clamours of the fiery politicians, by the voice of one of its most distinguished minds; and it is with joy that I hasten to accept your invitation to join the ranks of those free minds who, in Europe, have conceived the project of a Déclaration d'Indépendance de l'Esprit."

28 Romain Rolland, letter to Dilip Kumar Roy, September 3, 1920. (Unpublished letter, available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris.)

> "The beautiful songs which you let us hear show to me how less deep the gulf is than it seems to be. In truth, I felt nearer to these forms of art and of musical thought than to the music of a Puccini or a Massenet. I believe that the Hindu musicians - you, Tagore, Coomaraswamy (whose chapter on the music of India I just read) - you exagerate the differences which separate this music from European music and

> the difficulties for a European to feel it. You judge the European musical temperament according to the English and the Americans, who are the least musical European races: (their music is almost non-existent)...
>
> Let us endeavour to reform that great Indo-European family, which has been criminally dispersed. It would have been equal to the gods, if it had been united."

29 Romain Rolland, letter to Rabindranath Tagore, August 26, 1919, in Rabindranath Tagore and Romain Rolland, p. 27.

> "The reading of Nationalism has been a great joy to me, for I share your thoughts entirely, and I like them more to-day that I have heard you expressing them, with this lofty and harmonius wisdom of yours which is dear to us."

30 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 18.

> "renunciation...poverty of life...calm confidence in one's power, by superabundance of life."

31 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 18.

> "The picture he gives of the tranquility and of the refreshing charm of India leads me to tell him that many Europeans, like me, were looking in vain in the world a refuge against the heavy brutalities: we will then choose India. Tagore affectionately offers me his hospitality."

32 Rabindranath Tagore, letter to Kalidas Nag, May 9, 1922, in Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 28.

33 Rabindranath Tagore, letter to Romain Rolland, July 13, 1926, in Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 130.

> "Before leaving India, I had a fixed aim in mind, it was to meet you. And we met, and though it was but for a few days only, those days were full, - days of rejoicing. In a celebration we have the home and many other things more."

34 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 233.

> "I want to remind Tagore by this example that the greatest monotheistic religions have the same bloody sources as what he denounces in India, under the name of Kâli. - I add that the important thing is to sublime those deep instincts (instead of wiping them out), and that it is quite shocking to see that Old Testament which fumes in the fat of victims,

> blossoming out into that supreme flower of the Gospel: the Lamb of God, innocent Christ sacrificed. (I am quite certain that Tagore will retain the unexpected shock.)"

35 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 240.

> "This date must bring together again around him his friends in the world, all those whose life has been enlightened, broadened, ennobled by his. He has been for us the living symbol of the Spirit of light and of harmony which soars, like the big free bird amidst tempests, - the song of eternity which Ariel plays on his golden harp, above the sea of unleased passions...But, as a sign of gratitude, let everybody offer a branch of his garden, one chapter of a book, a scientific research, a painting, a thought! - For all that we are and that we have created has its roots or its branches bathed in the great Ganges river of poetry and love."

36 duplicate numbering result: this one missing

37 Jean Biès, *Littérature Française et Pensée Hindoue Des Origines à 1950* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1973), p. 362.

> "But as the dream begins to become reality, the necessity of letters, of contacts, of meetings of which the Diary will take notice of regularly, starts becoming clearer and imposing itself; peopled by passing guests, admirers, correspondents and friends, abounding in proofs of an ever increasing interest, tokens of curiosity, of wonder, of adhesion. Nothing of what is Indian is foreign to him: Rolland enquires in turns about the differences of races and of music of India, about poets, artists and their talent; - about the activity of the Congress, the living conditions imposed upon the peasants, the convulsions of the country under the network of the English police; - about the teaching of philosophy, the life styles of the wise men, the superior powers of the raja-yoga. He even takes pleasure in collecting various tittle-tattle, in noting scrupulously whatever is reported to him on Ramakrishna, on Vivekananda, or what he himself observes about Tagore and Gandhi. Gradually is revealed to him an artistic and intellectual, social and political, spiritual and mystical India whose riches he will henceforth survey."

38 Romain Rolland, *Inde: Journal 1915-1943*, pp. 30-31. *Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence* (Delhi:

Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1976), pp. 7-8.

> "Nag sends us a copy of a letter written to him by Tagore in May 1922: it harmonizes with my thought.
>
> 'During my journey back to India, I thought that Mahatma Gandhi evoked in a profound and extended way, in the soul of our people, the idea to which men like Romain Rolland have devoted themselves. Consequently, I had decided to co-operate with his movement by my writings and action.'"

39 Romain Rolland, letter to Rabindranath Tagore, March 27, 1925, in Rabindranath Tagore and Romain Rolland, p. 62.

> "How much obliged I am to Kalidas Nag for letting me hear about you: he is the most precious messenger that we have: the Indian Hermes, who goes from the one to the other, bearing the news from Asia to Europe, and that of Europe to Asia, and joining their hands...Your presence is his greatest happiness. He is the most faithful and the most pious of friends. My sister and I love him fraternally."

40 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 25.

> "the first European work that has spoken directly to the hearts of the Hindus, the only one which is universal first before being European."

41 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 27.

> "drink at the cup of Truth."

42 Romain Rolland, letter to Kalidas Nag, June 17, 1922 (Unpublished letter, available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris.)

> "I do not want to bother Tagore with my thoughts - which must be familiar to him. But if you think that he can find some of them interesting, make them known to him, please."

43 Romain Rolland, letter to Kalidas Nag, March 2, 1923, in Gandhi et Romain Rolland, Cahier 19 (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1969), p. 186.
Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence (Delhi: Publications Divison, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1976), p. 9.

> "...I have finished my Gandhi, in which I pay tribute to your two great river-like souls, overflowing with the divine spirit, Tagore and

Gandhi."

44 Kalidas Nag, "Romain Rolland and India", Modern Review, 119, No. 2 (February, 1966), pp. 113-115.

45 Ibid.

46 Romain Rolland, letter to Kalidas Nag, August 18, 1925 (Unpublished letter, available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris.)

> "My very dear Nag, decidedly you are the only Bengali Indian who unites the qualities of your race to those of exactness, of prompt and precise action, which are the appanage of Europe, and which we need so much for a common action. But one only, is too little. You cannot do all; you would be crushed, and I want you to take care of your dear health."

47 Dhan Gopal Mukerji, "A Son of Mother India Answers", World Unity Magazine, (July, 1928), pp. 260-266.

48 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 407.

> "...the great artist who, the first, revealed Ramakrishna to me."

49 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 142.

> "I was surprised by the reading by my sister of a few pages of Mukerji's book, that I felt soon the duty to study and to make known in Europe the extraordinary personality of Ramakrishna and of his impetuous disciple, Vivekanada."

50 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 158.

> "...attracted...by the almost mythical personalities of Sri Ramakrishna and of Vivekananda.

51 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Ramakrishna, p. 7.
The Life of Ramakrishna, trans. E.F. Malcolm-Smith, (Calcutta: Advaita Asharama, 1970), p. v.

> "my faithful companion in this pilgrimage of the Soul, my sister, Madeleine, without whom I should not have been able to accomplish this long journey."

52 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 158.

> "India is immortal, if she persists in the quest for God. But she will die, if she gets involved in politics and in social struggles."

53 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 159.
"...born enemy of the logic of Europe, of the eternal mechanization of actions and thoughts, which pretends to 'organize' them, by petrifying them."

54 Ibid.
"the perpetual freedom of the inner flood,"

55 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 166.
"Miss MacLeod was saying, one day, to Sarada Devi (Ramakrishna's wife): - 'Your husband has had the good part; he has had to bear the good message but in India, among his own people: consequently it was all joy for him. Vivekananda's mission was more trying: he had to be the bearer of Indian thought outside, among foreign and hostile people; he had the most heroic share.'

'Yes,' replied Sarada Devi, very simply, 'he was greater. My husband used to say that he was the body, and Vivekananda was the head.'"

56 Romain Rolland, letter to Gandhi, October 1, 1925, in Gandhi et Romain Rolland, p. 15.
Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, p. 48.
"You will soon be receiving at Sabarmati Miss Madeleine Slade, whom you have been kind enough to admit to your Ashram. She is a dear friend of my sister and myself; I look upon her as a spiritual daughter and I am delighted that she is coming to put herself under your direction. I know how good it will be for her, and I am sure you will find in her one of your most staunch and faithful disciples. Her soul is full of admirable energy and ardent devotion; she is straightforward and upright. Europe cannot offer a nobler or more disinterested heart to your cause. May she bear with her the love of thousands of Europeans, and my veneration."

57 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 152.
Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, p. 84.
"Our friend (Madeleine Slade), who is still, with unquenchable ardour, corresponding regularly from India with my sister and describing her experiences of religious life with Gandhi and his disciples."

58 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 83.
"I see her as one of the Holy Women who used to surround Jesus, and who made the legend. I think that, if nothing baffles human expectations, she is

> destined to play a great role in the establishment of the legend and of the faith of the new Christ."

59 M.K. Gandhi, letter to Romain Rolland, November 13, 1925, in Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, pp. 50-51.

60 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 84.
Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, p. 54.

> "ecstatic lettres"

61 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, pp. 84-85.
Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, p. 54.

> "Her series of letters to my sister will in due course constitute an amazing document for the religious historian. Her conversations with the Mahatma and the spirit of adoration in which she listens and retains them are just like a new Gospel. Certainly Gandhi is not inferior to Christ in goodness and sanctity, and he surpasses him in touching humility. As to Madeleine Slade, as I foresaw, she is a Holy Woman to this new Saviour."

62 Madeleine Slade, letter to Romain Rolland, March 16, 1928, in Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, p. 103.

63 Romain Rolland, Quinze Ans de Combat (Paris: Les Editions Rieder, 1935), p. xxxiv.
I Will Not Rest, trans. K.S. Shelvankar (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1937), p. 39.

> "The great influence which dominated my spirit in those years was that of Gandhi. The small book which I have devoted to him was just finished in February, 1923, when in London, in May, 1923, I made the acquaintance of C.F. Andrews; and then in September of the same year, of W.W. Pearson, who were Gandhi's two comrades through his epic struggle in South Africa. These two men, one of whom, Pearson, was to meet with a tragic death some days after leaving me, made me think of the first apostles of Christ: they had the same virile and simple serenity."

64 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 34.
Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, p. 11.

> "testimony was so useful to me in my study on Gandhi."

65 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 208.
Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, pp. 124-125.

> "recruiting role for England at the beginning of the war, and his exhortations to boycott and burn foreign merchandise."

66 Rabindranath Tagore, *Sadhana: The Realisation of life*, (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1921), p. 16.

67 Rabindranath Tagore, op. cit., p. 5.

68 Romain Rolland, *Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 36.*
Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, p. 13.

> "Andrews approves of my comparison of Gandhi with St. Paul and Tagore with Plato. He says smilingly that Gandhi is very much St. Paul."

69 Charles Freer Andrews, letter to a friend, March 20, 1936, quoted by P.C. Roy, "Charles Freer Andrews: A friend of India", *The Indo-Asian Culture*, XX, No. 2 (April 1971), pp. 6-13.

70 Romain Rolland, *Inde: Journal 1915-1943*, pp. 44-45.

> "I am upset by it. It is not only an irretrievable loss for Santiniketan and for Tagore, whose faithful companion and perhaps the most reliable supporter he was, but to me personally it is a violent pain: for the only two days during which I had seen Pearson were enough for me to love him...Noble and stoical victim of his chivalrous generosity, which had separated him from his people and dedicated to share the life of a nation far from him, in whose home he was a stranger."

71 Romain Rolland, op. cit., pp. 412-413.

> "Farewell, Andrews and Pearson, you who, full of bravery used to stand beside the young Gandhi, in South Africa, - you two who were my guests at Olga villa! The world is not aware of heroes and saints, who have enlightened it."

72 Charles Freer Andrews, "W.W. Pearson: A Memoir", *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* (October 1924), pp. 229-238.

73 Romain Rolland, *Inde: Journal 1915-1943*, p. 87.
Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, p. 61.

> "the least Gadhian of men"

74 Lala Lajpat Rai, letter to Romain Rolland, June 25, 1924. (Unpublished letter, available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris.)

75 Romain Rolland, Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, pp. 520-521.

76 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 382.
"a great Experience"

77 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 384.
"could not be the pivotal centre of all social action."

78 Ibid.
"this heinous state of affairs, which is permanent Crime."

79 Romain Rolland, letter to Subhas Chandra Bose, April 27, 1935, in Inde: Journal 1915-1943, pp. 384-385.
"Therefore we have to act against it, by all weapons of non-violence and of violence, which can reach the purpose most promptly and most surely. I do not repudiate any weapon, provided it is in the hands of brave, frank and disinterested fighters. My proper task has been since a few years, to try to bring together the non-violent and violent revolutionary forces, in the common fight against social Crime, against the old order which enslaves and exploits humanity."

80 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 392.
"We hasten to send him our wishes of sympathy in the risks he is going to take and in his fights for the independence of India."

81 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 397.
"beautiful thoughts, brilliant, striking, readily playing on antitheses, and harmoniously balanced."

82 Ibid.
"But if I agree to give him credit, I find it hard to forgive him for his aristocratism. It is an Ashram for the rich. In our times of painful fights to diminsh poverty and tyranny, it is terribly selfish to shut himself in his upholstered Ashram, to seek the fullness of his unhampered development. These are games of the privileged."

83 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 399.

"Through his publications on Vivekananda in the West, Jean Herbert is spreading the thought of Ramakrishna with a remarkable diligence and a passionate zeal."

84 Romain Rolland, letter to Amia C. Chakravarty, March 18, 1917, in op. cit., p. 13.

"bring together the mind of Europe and that of Asia."

85 Romain Rolland, op. cit. p. 407.

86 Romain Rolland, letter to Alphonse de Châteaubriant, February 17, (unpublished letter available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris.)

"unite all nations and all thoughts."

87 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 413.

"gathered the most complete collection of Ramakrishna's thoughts, and he is restoring their native vitality, which his disciples modestly veil."

88 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 45.

"broaden at last the horizons of the mind of the Sorbonne"

89 Paul Masson-Oursel, "Romain Rolland, ami de l'Inde", in Hommage à Romain Rolland, (Genève: Les Editions du Mont Blanc, S.A., 1945), pp. 66-68.

"Of Romain Rolland's admirers, none ignores with what burning sympathy he has collected from the teaching of Ramakrishna and of Vivekananda the message of India to the modern world. But few people know with what touching gratitude the name of Romain Rolland is venerated there."

90 Romain Rolland, Quinze Ans de Combat (Paris: Les Editions Rieder, 1935), p. xxxiv.

I Will Not Rest, trans. K.S. Shelvankar (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1937), pp. 8-39.

"But at the time of which I write (1922-1927) I was still in the period of uncertaintly and impassioned inquiry. I could feel 'the Storm over Europe' coming. I scented it in the air, with my enfevered nostrils. And I thought - much less for my sake: at sixty years of age, one is close to the exits, than for the sake of those I love, for the sake of our

Europe - for the shelter, the ramparts with which to counter it.

It was then that I saw surging up in the plains of the Indus the citadel of the spirit which had been raised by the frail and unbreakable Mahatma. And I set myself to rebuild it in Europe. His vindication of the 'still small voice' was akin to that in my *Clérambault*. He sealed it with the seal of a life lived (of the virtue in books, one is weary), of a pure and heroic life which, through its example of sacrifice, carried along a whole nation in its wake.

The great influence which dominated my spirit in those years was that of Gandhi."

91 Romain Rolland, *Inde: Journal 1915-1943*, p. 247. *Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence*, p. 148.

"-the people of Europe as well as of India - whose voice and whose highest conscience you are!"

92 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 252. *Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence*, p. 163.

"Many letters and telegrams exchanged with London through Mira (Miss Slade)."

93 Romain Rolland, letter to Mira (Miss Slade), November 9, 1931, in *Gandhi et Romain Rolland*, Cahier 19, pp. 65-68. *Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence*, p. 156.

"This life of mine has been remarkably troubled and disarrayed by all the winds that blow, both within and without, and it is only by will-power that I have held my frail barque on a straight course, assailed from all sides and suspended between Pascal's two abysms: the Void and the All, which are perhaps the two faces of the One. In this tragic passage - not mine alone, but that of a whole age of humanity - my guide has been the stars whose light penetrates the clouds; Mahatmaji is one of those stars."

94 M.K. Gandhi, *Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence*, pp. 180-181.

95 Romain Rolland, *Inde: Journal 1915-1943*, p. 257. *Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence*, p. 169.

"a religious people used to Ahimsa for centuries."

96 Romain Rolland, *Inde: Journal 1915-1943*, p. 257.

Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, pp. 169-170.
"There are little islands of Ahisma, very thinly scattered in Anglo-Saxon, Czec and Slavonic territories, but almost non-existent in the Latin countries. This is not for lack of religious feeling, of which there is plenty in the West; but such feeling nearly always has the fighting character of a 'church militant'; holy books are deformed by State religions, and in any case the texts of these books are not sufficiently precise; they gave rise to some scandalous controversies during the war years. Above all, the Western spirit is practical by nature, short-sighted and directed to short-term aims."

97 M.K. Gandhi, *Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence*, p. 180.

98 Romain Rolland, *Par la Révolution la Paix* (Paris: Editions Sociales Internationales, 1935), p. 117.
"our method consists in encouraging the use of all possible means of non-violent struggle."

99 Romain Rolland, *L'Ame Enchantée*, "L'Annonciatrice" Vol. III, (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1933), p. 198.
"It is no longer time for beating about the bush. Either for or against! Academic discussions on violence or non-violence are no longer in season...All must have a place in the army."

100 Romain Rolland, *Par la Révolution la Paix*, p.
"All can and must be of service in the common fight: violence and non-violence."

101 Romain Rolland, "Lettre à un ami allemand contre l'abdication du Parti social-démocrate allemand, 31 mars 1933", in *Quinze Ans de Combat*, p. 201.
I Will Not Rest, p. 293.
"For the essential point is not 'violence or non-violence', it is 'Act'."

102 Romain Rolland, letter to Kalidas Nag, December 24, 1933, in *Gandhi et Romain Rolland*, pp. 334-335.
Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, pp. 300-301.
"I wish that Gandhi would work towards a clearer formulation of his social thought. The time is coming all over the world when we shall have to take sides decisively in one or other of the two camps, or else withdraw from political action - into the

forest..."

103 Romain Rolland, letter to Gandhi, April 4, 1934 in*Gandhi et Romain Rolland*, pp. 154-157.
Romain Rolland and Gandhi: *Correspondence*, pp. 302-305.

> "The great experiment of Satygraha which you are carrying out, and whose issue is till uncertain, has, I hope, a strong chance of victory in India, but it has none, in my opinion, in Europe at the moment."

104 M.K. Ganhi, *Romain Rolland and Gandhi*: *Correspondence*, p. 188.

105 M.K. Gandhi, op. cit, p. 189.

106 M.K. Gandhi, op. cit., p. 190.

107 Romain Rolland,*Gandhi et Romain Rolland*, p. 107.

> "it lacks a very important attribute of God, which is Joy."

108 Romain Rolland, *Gandhi et Romain Rolland*, p. 107.
Romain Rolland and Gandhi: *Correspondence*, p. 208.

> "true art and healthy beauty."

109 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 107 and cit. trans., p. 208.

> "Great art has harmony as its essence, and it brings peace, health and equilibrium to the soul. It communicates them at once by the senses and by the mind: for both senses and mind have the right to joy."

110 M.K. Gandhi, *Romain Rolland and Gandhi*: *Correspondence*, p. 209.

111 Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), pp. 293-294.

112 Romain Rolland, *Gandhi et Romain Rolland*, p. 117.
Romain Rolland and Gandhi: *Correspondence*, p. 219.

> "In reality the workers are not united, as the capitalists have their intrigues; they foster divisions and buy 'blackleg' labour."

113 M.K. Gandhi, op. cit., p. 221.

114 M.K. Gandhi, op. cit., p. 222.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid.

117 Ibid.

118 M.K. Gandhi, op. cit., p. 223

119 Romain Rolland, letter to Dilip Kumar Roy, in D.K. Roy, *Among the Great*, (Bombay: Nalanda Publications, 1947), p. 42.

120 Romain Rolland, *Jean-Christophe* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1954), p. 1070.
Jean-Christophe, trans. Gilbert Cannan (London: Calder and Boyars, Jupiter Books, 1966), p. 408.

> "But I am not a soldier in the army of force. I am soldier a in the army of the spirit: with thousands of other men who are my brothers-in-arms I represent France in that army. Let Caesar conquer the world if he will! We march to the conquest of truth."

121 Ibid.

> "Truth is life. It is not to be found in your own head, but to be sought for in the hearts of others. Attach yourself to them, be one with them. Think as much as you like, but every day take a bath of humanity."

122 Romain Rolland, *L'Ame Enchantée* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1967), p. 1108.

> "The *still voice* of the eternal soul, daughter of God"

123 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 1106.

> "*Your* truth is *your* nature. Do not betray, do not violate your nature, by espousing that of another."

124 Romain Rolland, op. cit., p. 1107.

> "Whatever it was, thanks to those who were speaking to him according to law, the unique law of truth! For he was understanding now, better than ever before. That that law was his: it was his mission to be true. Suffer, err, contradict oneself, even fall and get dirty but be true! We will get up. We will wash ourselves. A true soul cannot be damned. The worm of death cannot prey upon incorruptible truth. And the heart of Marc was swelling at the thought

> that that proper law of truth, with which his nature was marked, was also, without his knowing it, the core of the soul of Gandhi, towards whom a blind instinct of defense had driven him, - though he did not have to follow the same path. (I had revealed to him the Credo of the little, frail and unbreakable man, who was leading three hundred millions of men: - '*Truth is God*...')"

125 M.K. Gandhi, *Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence*, p. 238.

126 Romain Rolland, *Mahatma Gandhi*, (Paris: Editions Stock, 1966), p. 11.

> "The man who has become one with the universal Being"

127 Romain Rolland, *Gandhi et Romain Rolland*, p. 420. *Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence*, pp. 345-346.

> "Gandhi, for India, is not only a hero of their national history whose memory will pass as a legend into the age-old epic. He has not only been the spirit of life and action who has breathed into the people of India the proud consciousness of their unity, their power and their will to independence. For all the peoples of the West he has renewed the message of Christ which had been forgotten or betrayed. He has inscribed his name among the sages and saints of humanity; and the radiance of his features has found its way into every region of the earth."

128 Ibid.

> "One of the first in the West to discover and spread the Word of the Mahatma."

129 M.K. Gandhi, letter to Madeleine Rolland, January 6, 1933, in *Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence*, pp. 269-271.

130 M.K. Gandhi, in Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase*, Vol. I, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1956), p. 105.

131 Horace Alexander, *Gandhi Through Western Eyes*, (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1969), p. 86.

132 Romain Rolland, *La Vie de Ramakrishna*, (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1973), p. 28.
Prophets of the New India, trans. E.F.

Malcom-Smith (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1930), p. 4.
"that torrid land, the burning womb of the Gods."

133 Romain Rolland, letter to Paul Amann, February 9, 1923, in _Gandhi et Romain Rolland_, p. 180.
Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, p. 363.
"But for these two lights to come to us from India at the same time - what a moral fortune for a people! Europe has nothing similar to set up against it..."

134 Romain Rolland, letter to Tagore, May 7, 1922, in _Rabindranath Tagore et Romain Rolland_, p. 37.
"If however my presence could be useful to you in something, I would like to come to spend some time at Santiniketan. In any case it would not be this year, but perhaps in autumn or in winter of 1923, if however my shaky health allowed me to do so. I would thus realize one of the dreams of my life."

135 Romain Rolland, letter to Sofia Bertolini, in _Chère Sofia_, Cahier 11, p. 292.
"I am even planning for a trip to India, where Tagore is inviting me to spend a winter at his Santiniketan, in Bengal; but my health obliges me no doubt to postpone it for next year. India is attracting me strongly: I have there a number of friends, whose sharp intelligence, vast culture and a moral fervour I love and admire and which we no longer find in Europe."

136 Romain Rolland, letter to Andrée Karpelès, in _Rabindranath Tagore et Romain Rolland_, pp. 122-123.
"Dear friend, you ask me why I do not write a 'Tagore'? - It is one of my wishes. To realize it, I would like to go to India, to live near the poet for a few months or a few weeks. For we do not write a 'Tagore' as we write a 'Gandhi'. It is infinitely more complex and richer in thought, and also more Indian. One must be able to interpenetrate the intimate atmosphere of the soul - and of the milieu. May destiny allow me to make this trip and this stay there, near the melodious Clairvoyant."

137 Romain Rolland, letter to Jean Guéhenno, October 22, 1932, in _L'Indépendance de l'Esprit_, Cahier 23, (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1975), p. 226.

> "The meeting of these two men, - Tagore, old sick, shaky, who has crossed the whole of India, to be at the bedside of Gandhi sacrificing himself within an inch of the fatal issue, and the two men uniting in that prayer, - it is one of the most beautiful scenes of history."

138 Romain Rolland, Le Périple, (Paris: Editions Emile-Paul Frères, 1946), p. 42.

> "Illusions I had, perhaps, in the sphere of metaphysics. But none, in the area of men and facts."

139 Romain Rolland, "Acte de Reconnaissance d'un Homme d'Occident à Gandhi", in Gandhi et Romain Rolland, p. 422. Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, p. 348.

> "For the rest of us, intellectuals, scientists, writers and artists, we who also work, as much as our feeble forces will allow, to prepare for the spirit this City of all men in which reigns the peace of God, we who are the third order (in the language of the Church) and who belong to the Pan-Humanist brotherhood, - we send our fervent tribute of love and veneration to Gandhi our master and brother, who in his heart and in his action realizes our ideal of the humanity to come."

"But amidst all the beliefs of Europe and Asia, that of the Indian Brahmins seems to me infinitely the most alluring. I do not at all despise the others... And the reason why I love the Brahmin more than the other school of Asiatic thought is because it seems to me to contain them all. Greater than all European philosophies, it is even capable of adjusting itself to the vast hypotheses of modern science... It does not expect that the world will be suddenly and miraculously transformed by a war or a revolution, or an act of God. It embraces vast stretches of time, cycles of human ages, whose successive lives gravitate in concentric circles, and travel ever slowly towards the centre, the Place of Deliverance - already attained in certain of the souls of the Prophets."

[Romain Rolland, Preface to Ananda Coomaraswamy, The Dance of Shiva: Fourteen Indian Essays (Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1948), pp. 8-10.]

CHAPTER III

ROMAIN ROLLAND POPULARIZER OF VEDANTIC THOUGHT IN THE WEST

Romain Rolland's Predisposition To Indian Thought: Religousity and Mystical Experience

Before considering Romain Rolland's interest in Vedantic Mysticism, it would no doubt be interesting to look at what critics have described as the spiritual predisposition of the great writer who, by his own admission, had a sort of mystical experience during his adolescent years.

Let us first establish his view of Christianity, for his attitude towards this religion did prepare him, so to speak, to welcome Hindu thought. That this attitude was an ever negative one, was no secret right from the outset though his mother's vigilance concerning his religious formation was unfailing. However, that vigilance was very often accompanied by a Jansenist pessimism which was unbearable to the young Rolland and the failure of his mother's attempt to make of him a practicing Christian was evident right from the beginning. Her "rigorisme moral, d'acier, implacable au mensonge, aux compromis, aux petites lâchetés où se dissout l'élan de l'âme, en sa montée"[1] utterly failed to bring him closer to the Church. On the contrary, her rigorous and uncompromising attitude encouraged him to keep aloof from the Church:

> Et l'esprit religieux de ma mère, pour qui nulle grandeur humaine ne valait, hors Dieu, y sut mettre toujours un rude correctif. Je souffrais de mes faiblesses morales, de mes petites lâchetés, des mes petits mensonges, et de mes mauvaises places, comme d'une infirmité et presque d'un déshonneur, sous le regard attristé de mon juge sévère... Et pourtant, (explique qui pourra!) ce Dieu____ ce Dieu de l'Eglise, y ai-je jamais cru? Oui, par procuration. Sur la parole de ma mère.[2]

It was not surprising, then, when in 1882, at the age of sixteen he ceased to practice his religion and for him God of the Church was no more. We may well be led to believe that this breach with his religion was a sign of weakness on his part. But as far as he was concerned, it was neither immorality nor weakness; it was strength:

> Mon premier act d'énergie, à cette heure d'adolescence où je sombrais sans Dieu, fut de rompre avec ma religion. Ce fut mon acte le plus religieux. (J'y reviendrai). Par respect pour moi-même et pour le Dieu caché, je n'ai pas voulu feindre, mimer le semblant de croire, récrépir la façade, m'obstiner à pratiquer. Dieu! je suis franc avec toi! Je ne vais pas à ta Messe. Je la sais trop auguste, pour agenouiller devant ton sanglant sacrifice un corps veuf de son âme, et dont la bouche remue des oraisons à vide. Je ne crois pas en toi.[3]

This is what he calls being true to one's nature and which he prescribes to his Marc in *L'Ame Enchantée*. He was an enemy of self-deception and therefore he preferred to make his mother suffer rather than to have recourse to it. However proud he was of that act of faithfulness toward himself, he could not ignore the painful impact it had on his dear mother: "Ma rupture avec le catholicisme fit saigner le coeur de ma mère."[4]

As far as his father was concerned, being a non-believer, he was simply shocked. Breaking away from the Church should not, however, be interpreted as atheism. Far from it! When the Church was forgotten, it was replaced by music which became for him "la bonne Déesse de ma vie."[5] Henceforth, music was going to be his religious cult and the time devoted to it was sacred. Fortunately indeed, it did not take long for the mother to understand that her dear child was serving God his own way: "son petit musicien, révolté contre Dieu, servait Dieu."[6]

He was particularly happy about this event and he noted that while he was serving God through his piano she was doing the same through the Bible. This would be the situation till the end. Paul Claudel, the great Catholic writer, in his study of the religious thought of his friend, Rolland, stresses this fact when he remarks that:

> Ce fut d'abord Spinoza, puis Tolstoï, plus tard les Hindous, mais toujours le maître, le vrai maître, le guide auquel il ne cessa jamais, d'un bout à l'autre de sa longue carrière, de s'attacher avec une dévotion de plus en plus intense, curieuse et passionnée, et auquel il consacra presque exclusivement les dernières années de sa vie, ce fut le grand révélateur, le grand inspiré qu'on appelle Ludwig van Beethoven.[7]

Rolland's breach with the Church was irrevocable; if he did agree to a Church service for the dead in his will, it was simply to respect his pious friends:

> Bien que je ne croie pas aux cérémonies de l'Eglise, je consens à ce que mon corps soit porté à l'Eglise Saint-Martin de Clamecy, et qu'on célèbre l'office des morts. Je crois qu'en m'y refusant, je ferais scandale parmi d'honnêtes gens qui sont mes amis et que j'ajouterais à la peine des coeurs qui me sont chers. Je ne le veux pas.[8]

This respect for the religious beliefs of others is maintained till the end without, however, any adherence to a particular faith, not even to those he admired, like Hinduism and Buddhism. Nowhere is this respect more evident than in his study on Vedantic Mysticism.

As we have pointed out in our previous chapter, the pro-war attitude of the Church was so revolting to him that he openly criticised it in his writings, particularly in his Journal des Années de Guerre where the bankruptcy of the Church is a dominant theme. The pro-war attitude of Christian religious leaders sealed his hostility towards the Church for ever. This hostility should not, however, be interpreted as hate for Christianity. Of its virtues he was not only aware but also would refer to them in his writings even when he is talking of Gandhi and Tagore. Had he not found in Gandhi a St-Paul and the new Christ? When listening to Tagore's views on the religion of India, he could not help thinking of Christian virtues:

> Jamais je n'ai mieux senti qu'en entendant Tagore la puissante vertu du christianisme, et tout ce que lui doivent les races d'Occident: l'exemple permanent du Christ, agissant et souffrant, - la veille perpétuelle de la conscience, comme de la lampe du St Sacrement, l'examen quotidien, - la confession morale, - etc.[9]

His Christ was never the Christ of the Church or the manifestation of the Divine but rather a hero of mankind - the saviour of the unfortunate: "Nous sommes tous du même côté de la muraille. De l'autre côté il y a Dieu. Tout seul, - qu'il y reste!"[10] According to him, the Christ he admired was "plus près de Bouddha que des Brahmanes mitrés de France et d'Allemagne"[11] and gradually it drew him away from the Church and the fanaticism of the religious bigots. As the breach became a reality it was obvious that he had placed his faith in a universal God, the God of the mystics.

Rolland's mystical experience dates back to his adolescence and since he has written about it in his autobiographical work, *Le Voyage Intérieur* and in *Le Cloître de la Rue D'Ulm*, his Teachers' Training College diary, we can refer to it in a precise way. The first statement we come across is quite meaningful. On November 16, 1886, he noted in his diary: "Moi, le mysticisme m'assiège, je sens que je vais y tomber."[12] and a few days later he made the following comment on one of his classmates: "Il (Suarès) était tout le Midi, exubérant et sensuel, et j'étais tout le Nord, mystique et concentré..."[13] In January 1887, while attending a concert of Beethoven, Spohr, Brahms and Schumann he felt as if he were experiencing a kind of mystical ecstasy:

> Je remarque au concert, avec une véritable inquiètude, la torpeur qui s'empare de tout mon être à certains moments assez fréquents. Je l'ai déjà senti, à l'Ecole: j'ai une tendance à l'extase hypnotique, soit par l'ouïe, soit par la vue. Ma personnalité s'engouffre.[14]

The same year he wrote to Tolstoy twice; in his first letter he questioned the latter on his concept of art as a selfish means of rejoicings by exciting our feelings. Disagreeing with the novelist, he pointed out that art means more than simply a "sensualisme aristocratique."[15] According to him it is also - "l'oubli de la personalité égoïste, l'absorption dans l'Unité divine, l'extase."[16]

Two years later he declared that he had tasted something like this ecstasy himself:

> Il est remarquable comme je me détache souvent de moi. Ceux qui me sont chers, je sais qu'ils aiment Romain et que Romain les aime. Mais que l'existence de ce Romain et la leur m'est lointaine! Qu'elle est pâle! Je me laisse sucer par la vie d'en haut; et, de là, je les regarde passer, eux et moi, avec une bienveillance un peu indifférente. Il me semble que je suis dans le sein de Dieu; et j'espère qu'un jour je nous y sentirai réunis.[17]

and to an Indian friend he made the following confession:

> ...I for one have always felt that mysticism is a great boon of the Gods, and I would hardly care to live in a world from which all the mystic savours are banished for ever. For I value mysticism as a perennial source of some of the most glorious thrills that are given to mankind to experience.[18]

Such declarations remind us of his horoscope cast in 1889 by one of his classmates. According to it, he was supposed to attain "...une sorte de nirvâna, par la passion, et plus encore par la raison."[19] All these indications of mysticism may appear trivial at first sight but look much more meaningful when seen in the light of what he himself has to tell us about his mystical experience - "Les trois éclairs" - "those three flashes that illumined his adolescence and early manhood,"[20] in his spiritual autobiography, Le Voyage Intérieur.

Romain Rolland was obsessed by the idea of death and a deep feeling of confinement since childhood. He believed that life was a jail in which he was trapped: "Je suis prisonnier! ...J'étais dans 'La Ratoire'."[21] From this jail he doggedly tried to escape no sooner had the obsession begun to gnaw at his tender mental disposition. His success in liberating himself is well described by one of the reviewers of his *Le Voyage Intérieur*, W. E. Garrison, who wrote in October 1947:

> His escape from this prison was not into what most people would consider a normal state of individual freedom limited only by the normal social situations and economic conditions, but into the unconfined spaces of the infinite and èternal.[22]

It was that very escape that was going to enable him to taste the three mystical experiences which deserve our attention. Soon after his liberation he started living two lives, the one temporal and superficial, the other deep and eternal:

> J'ai toujours vécu, parallèlement, deux vies, - l'une, celle du personnage que les combinaisons des éléments héréditaires m'ont fait revêtir, dans un lieu de l'espace et une heure du temps, - l'autre, celle de l'Etre sans visage, sans nom, sans lieu, sans siècle, qui est la substance même et le souffle de toute vie.[23]

We hardly need to mention here that he attached much importance to the second life whose influence on him, he strongly believed was never to fade away till his self itself faded because those "jets de l'âme"[24] had filled his veins with "du feu qui fait battre le coeur de l'univers"[25] and had left too deep an imprint on his adolescent flesh:

> La trace de leur brûlure est restée aussi vive en mon vieux corps que l'épreuve a depuis roulé comme un galet, qu'à la minute lointaine où elle s'imprimait dans la chair délicate et fiévreuse de l'adolescent.[26]

Those illuminating flashes which overwhelmed him while putting him in direct communion with universal life were not, however, his inseparable companions nor did they come to him at expected times; each one manifested itself in a particular way though the effect was similar:

> ...j'ai vécu séparé d'elle et proche, l'entendant cheminer avec moi, sous le rocher, - et soudain, de loin en loin, aux instants que je m'y attendais le moins, vivifié par ces irruptions de ces flots artésiens qui me frappaient à la face et qui me terrassaient.[27]

The first of the three flashes came to him as a shock while he was admiring the landscape from the terrace of Voltaire's old house at Ferney. It all happened in twenty seconds but that was enough to illuminate his virgin mind. The light that revealed itself to him was in the harmony of the landscape he was admiring: "L'harmonie pleine et calme, aux accords consonants, finement instrumentée, sans cuivres inutiles, bois et cordes, vision claire, dessin net, et raison voluptueuse..."[28] The benevolent effect of this first 'éclair' upon his mind did not take long to manifest itself. It widened his knowledge at a time when his "intelligence était encore fermée aux idées abstraites."[29] and threw light on past experiences by dispelling all doubts: "...Tout prit son sens, tout s'expliqua."[30]

The second mystical experience which Rolland called 'l'éclair de Spinoza' came two years later. The discovery of

Spinoza had a tremendous impact on his mind and one wonders whether this impact ever lost its momentum. For certain, Spinoza's philosophy was his "élixir de vie éternelle"[31] at the time of his discovery. That Spinoza's thought had a lasting effect upon his mind is also beyond any doubt: "Je n'oublierai que, dans le cyclone de mon adolescence, j'ai trouvé mon refuge au nid profond de *l'Ethique*..."[32] In Spinoza's *l'Ethique* he had found that part of his self which he had so far ignored: "...dans le texte même de Spinoza je découvrais non lui, mais moi ignoré."[33] In other words, he had found what he was looking for since childhood - a realistic approach to man and nature. It was not Spinoza the rationalist that appealed to him but rather Spinoza the realist, he pointed out. He learned from him that what is eternal is real and what is the real is particular, and he joyfully cried out:

> Vertige!... vin de feu!
> Ma prison s'est ouverte. Voilà donc la réponse, obscurément conçue dans la douleur et dans le désespoir, appelée par des cris de passions aux ailes brisées, obstinément cherchée, voulue, dans les meurtrissures et les larmes de sang, la voilà rayonnante, la réponse à l'énigme du Sphinx qui m'étreint depuis l'enfance, - à l'antinomie accablante entre l'immensité de mon être intérieur et le cachot de mon individu, qui m'humilie et qui m'étouffe! ... '*Nature naturante*' et '*nature naturée*' ... C'est la même. 'Tout ce qui est est en Dieu.' Et moi aussi, je suis en Dieu! De ma chambre glacée, où tombe la nuit d'hiver, je m'évade au gouffre de la *Substance*, dans le soleil blanc de l'Etre.[34]

The pantheistic philosophy of Spinoza with its idea of universal life in which everybody participates was particularly attractive to the young Rolland who had just foresaken the God of the Church. This "sens libérateur de la vraie pensée de Spinoza"[35] had a decisive effect on his life and works for the conviction that Spinoza's intuition "ouvre les cieux fermés"[36] had set their roots deeply in his mind. Once under the influence of that philosophy, he felt as being an integral part of an infinite substance in which nature and man are united and that feeling was not only liberating but also provided him with harmony, moral power, and inner peace. Besides, Spinoza had revealed to him the joy that is the source of human perfection, a joy which he himself had tasted during the 'éclair': "De mes yeux, de mes mains, de ma langue, de tous les pores de ma pensée, je l'ai goûtée. J'ai étreint l'Etre."[37] So impressed was he by the discovery of Spinoza's thought that he decided to adapt it to form his own principle of life and on April 11, 1887 his efforts were crowned with success when he completed the writing of his short treatise, *Credo quia verum*. Spinoza had finally brought him the inner peace he badly needed to "bâtir ma vie - ma vraie vie - mes passions et mes oeuvres"[38] when he had lost faith in the Church and was on the verge of committing suicide in the unbearable atmosphere of Paris. Spinoza had given him a new God - the universal one who is ever present in all living beings. The feeling that he was part of that God was more than enough to give him the peace, security and hope his shaken soul so badly needed. Henceforth this new God was going to be his reliable support and only hope in life. Jacques Roos, writing about the influence of Spinoza on Romain Rolland makes no mistake when he draws the following conclusion:

> Ainsi l'éclair de Spinoza' a orienté Romain Rolland vers une voie qui, non seulement le conduit à se découvrir lui-même et à trouver Dieu, mais qui, chemin faisant, lui révèle le secret de s'unir à Dieu et, partant d'être Dieu.[39]

And Spinoza, according to Romain Rolland, "avait bu à la pensée religieuse de l'Inde."[40]

The third 'éclair' which he calls the revelation of Tolstoy in the darkness of the tunnel struck him when he was on a train which had suddenly stopped in a tunnel. Instead of being panic-stricken more than anybody else, since he was thinking of a recent accident, it was the opposite:

> Et ce fut comme si le tunnel s'ouvrait. Je voyais, au-dessus, les champs dans le soleil, les luzernes ondulantes, les alouettes qui montaient... Et blotti dans le coin sombre du wagon immobile, mon coeur rit d'allégresse...[41]

A year later, while reading Tolstoy's War and Peace, he found that Pierre Bezukhov had realized his freedom and his infinite nature in a similar way.

It is definitely with a purpose that Romain Rolland has written about the three revelations. As we have pointed out above they were of great importance to his artistic activity. The answers they brought to him were readily adapted and popularized; they enhanced his mission as an artist by helping him to visualize things in their proper perspectives. Commenting upon the second and third 'éclairs', Garrison writes:

> It is easy to see how this sense of participation in universal life is rooted in Spinoza's pantheism, and how it parallels Tolstoy's assertion (e.g. in his "Esarhaddon") that all persons are basically the same person. But Rolland is more emotional than Spinoza, more philosophical than Tolstoy, and more mystical than either.[42]

The critic is far from exaggerating when he finds Rolland more mystical. The inclination for mysticism had in fact manifested itself quite early in his life. Many a time he had felt being in harmony with reality while gazing at nature around him or even at a far off landscape. What the reading of Spinoza brought to him was the knowledge regarding the universal value of things and the divine nature of man. The feeling that he belonged to a universal system of life was in itself a liberating force for it enabled him to escape from painful circumstances and 'fly away' like "les alouettes qui montent vers le ciel, et la paix"[43] exactly as he did in the case in the train incident. This feeling of liberation was very dear to him and he bestowed it upon his heroine, Annette of L'Ame Enchantée. Like Rolland, she too, was liberated from her painful experience by an 'éclair':

> Elle avait une impression d'allègement, comme d'un lien desserré, d'un maillon de la chaîne qui vient de se briser... Et d'un éclair, elle eut la vision de cette chaîne de servitudes, dont l'âme se déleste lentement, une à une à travers la série des existences, des siennes, de celles des autres (c'est la même)... Et elle se demanda: - Pourquoi, pourquoi cet attachement éternel, cet arrachement éternel? Vers quelle liberation me pousse la marche sanglante du désir?...
>
> Ce ne fut qu'un instant...
>
> Tout ce qui l'entourait était le même qu'hier: la

> terre et le ciel, le passé et l'avenir. Mais tout ce qui accablait hier, - aujourd'hui rayonnait.[44]

Henceforth, Annette was going to lead "sa vie nouvelle"[45] for the light had dispelled the anxieties that had been torturing her mind. But long before he wrote *L'Ame Enchantée* Rolland had used his mystical experience in his *magnum opus*, *Jean-Christophe* where we find his hero feeling a strange inner force rising up since his childhood and when he reaches the age of puberty this force makes him experience ecstatic moments:

> Le voile se déchira. Ce fut un éblouissement. Il vit au fond de la nuit. Il vit. Il fut le Dieu. Le Dieu était en lui. Il brisait le plafond de la chambre, les murs de la maison. Il faisait craquer les limites de l'être. Le monde se ruait en lui comme une cataracte. Il était ivre de cette chute en Dieu. Dieu abîme! Dieu - gouffre! brasier de l'être, ouragan de la vie, folie de vivre sans but, sans frein, sans raison pour la fureur de vie![46]

This is but one of the mystical experiences Jean-Christophe had during his lifetime; the others were less intense but equally of mystical nature. Ernest Seillière, author of *Mysticisme et Domination* writing about the mystical aspect of *Jean-Christophe*, aptly remarks:

> Et cet accès de délire mystique se renouvelle ensuite, quoique moins intense mais toujours surgi à l'improviste des profondeurs de son émotivité turgescente et lui apportant ces effusions panthéistes chères aux grands mystiques depuis Jean-Jacques jusqu'à Tolstoï.[47]

To Prof. D. Bresky, author of an article on "Les Adventures mystiques de Jean-Christophe", however, Jean-Christophe's experiences were semi-mystical:

> L'absence de l'exaltation mystique n'empêche aucunement l'auteur de faire goûter à Christophe les délices de l'union mystique. Le Dieu qui se révèle à son héros beethovenien est loin de posséder le caractère du Créateur Judéo-Chrétien. Tantôt il fait songer à un des "éclairs semi-mystiques", tantôt il incarne l'idée spinosiste de l'immanence divine dans l'homme.[48]

This view may be supported by Rolland's own declaration that he never had a truly mystical experience.[49] Ever faithful to Spinoza, Rolland believes that the creator and his creation are but one and therefore nature is but God himself. It is not surprising then, that he shares with Spinoza the concept of divine joy known but to true geniuses who, through their creative force are able to reach the divine order. Who would deny the fact that the joy that Rolland makes Jean-Christophe, the genius, taste is purely Spinozan joy? Evidently, his description of the ecstatic joy experienced by Jean-Christophe is but an explanation of the Spinozan cult of joy:

> Et soudain, c'est l'éclair! Christophe hurlait de joie. Joie, fureur de joie, soleil qui illumine toute ce qui est et sera, joie divine de créer. Il n'y a d'êtres que ceux qui créent. Tous les autres sont des ombres, qui flottent sur la terre, étrangers à la vie. Toutes les joies de la vie sont des joies de créer: amour, génie, action - flambées de force sorties de l'unique braiser. Ceux même qui ne peuvent trouver place autour du grand foyer: - ambitieux, égoïstes et débauchés stériles, - tâchent de se réchauffer à ses reflets décolorés.
>
> Créer, dans l'ordre de la chair, ou dans l'ordre de l'esprit, c'est sortir de la prison du corps, c'est se ruer dans l'ouragan de la vie, c'est être Celui qui Est. Créer c'est tuer la mort.[50]

Once struck by the "jet de lumière"[51] Christophe was able to relish with gusto "cette jouissance de l'inspiration"[52] while developing a disgust for everything else. The flash of light that struck him visited him again and again each time illuminating a new area of 'his night':

> Ce n'était qu'un éclair; parfois il en venait d'autres, coup sur coup: chacun illuminait d'autres coins de la nuit. Mais d'ordinaire, la force capricieuse, après s'être manifestée une fois, à l'improviste, disparaissait pour plusieurs jours dans ses retraites mystérieuses, en laissant derrière elle un sillon lumineux.[13]

Thus, Christophe, guided by the light, that divine visitor, was able to give full expression to his creative genius by withdrawing from his idealism and by getting closer to the Creator:

> Toutes ses oeuvres étaient les chemins différents qui menaient au même but; son âme était une montagne; il en prenait toutes les routes; les unes s'attardaient à l'ombre en leurs détours moelleux; les autres montaient arides, âprement au soleil; toutes conduisaient au Dieu, qui siégeait sur la cime... Il se croyait libre de toute foi, et il n'était tout entier qu'une torche de foi.[14]

Romain Rolland: Mediator between Indian Thought and Europe

The deep-rooted inclination for mysticism coupled with his rejection of the Church ("Non, non, je ne suis pas chrétien; décidémment je ne puis l'être. Je n'ai qu'à vous entendre définir le christianisme: cette doctrine qui se concilie avec tout."),[15] prepared Rolland to welcome Hindu thought with enthusiasm. The sense of the Divine which he bestowed on his hero, Christophe and on his heroine, Annette, was a determining factor in the vital interest he took in Hindu thought whose conception of the Divine as a universal Being naturally captivated his attention right from the beginning. He underlines this aspect by quoting from Keshab Chunder Sen's *Epistle to Indian Brothers* (1880) and making the following comments:

> On ne peut rien lire de plus noble. C'est la plus haute expression du théisme universel; et elle sera bien proche des libres théistes d'Europe, qui refusent allégeance à une religion révélée. Elle ouvre ses bras à tous les esprits épurés de toute la terre: à ceux du passé, à ceux du présent, à ceux de l'avenir.[56]

After the publication of Rolland's *Mahatma Gandhi* in 1923, it was not hard to foresee the author's future interest in Indian thought. Had he not seen in Gandhi the man who had become one with the Supreme Being? In our previous chapter, we have mentioned Rolland's interests in Buddhism before the beginning of his Indian experience. But it was not Buddhism that was going to seduce him as much as the optimistic aspect and doctrine of universal love of Vedanta. This is particularly so because that love suited his own moral thought about the universal aspect of the divine. And to express his moral thought he has recourse to syncretism using Christian thought and Vedanta:

> C'est pour cela que l'entreprise de Vivekananda le fascine. Il n'a qu'une religion: la vie. C'est pour cela que Ramakrishna lui est inoubliable. Ce n'est pas d'un homme religieux, c'est le sentiment d'un homme profondément bon et qui place l'homme pardessus tout le reste.[57]

No sooner had he begun to meet Indian visitors than he felt he was in harmony of thought with them and no sooner had he begun to read about Indian thought than he recognized its affinities with his own thought:

> En lisant avec ma soeur (qui est mon interprète de l'anglais) le *Visva-Bharati-Quarterly*, la belle revue de Tagore, je suis frappé de la parenté de ma pensée avec celle des grands mystiques hindous. Certainement, j'étais, enfant, (ou, du moins, adolescent) plus près d'eux, de nature, que des mystiques chrétiens. - Ainsi, ce voyant populaire du XVIe siècle, le *Pâdu*, le poète corroyeur, qui considérait *la création* comme *continuant toujours*, et pour qui l'esprit suprême, comme celui de chaque être individuel, s'exprime perpétuellement dans le monde, *sans nécessité*, *pour leur joie*. Tous deux sont créateurs, et se mêlent d'une façon permanente dans leur création. 'Offrez-vous, vous-même! Vous n'avez à vous inquiéter d'aucune autre pensée. Car *cela*, c'est être pareil au maître... *O Dieu*, enseigne-moi à me rejouir en toi, comme tu te réjouis en moi, dans la grandiose Durbar de votre communion à jamais et à jamais!'
>
> Cette 'fraternité dans la création', de Dieu et de l'homme, est un des Credo secrets de ma nature.[58]

There is more than can meet the eyes in what Rolland is saying here. It is but the very beginning of his interest in Indian thought yet we can easily foresee his comparative approach to it. It is also interesting to note that after his Spinozan experience, he was more than ever naturally ready to welcome the idea of "fraternité dans la création"[59] - a very significant aspect of Indian thought. It is therefore imperative that we bear this in mind while dealing with Rolland's approach to Indian thought. The very first contacts with studies on the Upanishads had such an impact upon his mind that he spontaneously confessed:

> Comme toutes ces grandes paroles de l'Inde retentissent dans mon coeur! L'idéal de vérité, de connaissance, de vraie science du Brahman (de la substance et de l'ordre de l'univers) - a toujours été le mien, au cours de toute ma vie et non l'idéal moral, - en dépit des apparences.[60]

In the same vein he wrote to Hans Götzfried, a German student preparing a thesis on his heroic idealism in January

1928:

> Je crois à l'unité de l'Etre. Je crois à l'Identité, essentielle, du sujet et de l'objet. Si, depuis une dizaine d'années, je suis devenu de plus en plus intime avec la pensée Indienne, c'est que j'ai reconnu en elle - depuis ses grands Livres Saints primitifs, ses Vedas, jusqu'à ses plus géniaux poètes, penseurs et savants d'aujourd'hui - la forme la plus complète - et parfaite de ma propre pensée naturelle - et, j'en suis convaincu, de milliers de pensées d'Occident, qui s'ignorent.''

He found Indian thought so close to him that in 1923 he declared to his great friend Kalidas Nag: "Il sera bientôt temps que mon âme se mette en quête de son véritable milieu. Car je crois qu'à cette incarnation, je me suis trompé de maison."[13] Hence the enthusiasm, zeal and patience with which he started his studies of Indian thought.

In our previous chapter we mentioned in connection with the meeting of Rolland and Dhan Gopal Mukerji, that it was the latter's biography of Ramakrishna, The Face of Silence which had encouraged the Frenchman to write about Ramakrishna and Vivekananda for the benefit of Western readers. Noting Mukerji's visit on October 4, 1926, he wrote in his diary:

> Visite de Dhan Gopal Mukerji. Nous tenions beaucoup à le voir, pour causer avec lui du grand Hindou Ramakrishna, dont il est l'historien. J'ai été si saisi par la lecture que m'a faite ma soeur de quelques pages du livre de Mukerji, que j'ai senti aussitôt le devoir d'étudier et de faire connaître en Europe la personalité extraordinare de Ramakrishna et de son fougueux disciple, Vivekananda. Ramakrishna, qui était un homme inculte sans aucune instruction, mais qui paraît avoir possédé l'un des plus puissants génies d'intuition, a réalisé en lui la fusion parfaite de toutes les grandes religions. Je dis: 'réalisé'. Ce qui n'était chez d'autres qu'un idéal de l'esprit, un effort de

> synthèse intellectuelle, Ramakrishna l'a accompli, toute sa vie, d'instinct immédiat. Il a vécu Dieu, sous toutes ses formes torrentielles. Et il a eu le pouvoir de le rayonner sur tous ceux qui l'approchaient.[43]

It was with this deep convinction that Rolland decided to devote more than two years of his literary career to the study of Indian thought, leaving aside the composition of the third volume of his great novel, l'Ame Enchantée. Since his aim was to write about Indian thought for Western readers, he deemed it appropriate to make a comparative study by throwing light on the parallels so that Western readers may find oriental mysticism less strange. Such a task was quite demanding for his knowledge of Western mysticism was as poor as that of Indian thought. "The task is long and extremely difficult"[44] he wrote to Swami Ashokananda (Prabuddha Bharata May 1966). But it was with a rare determination and seriousness that he had undertaken that task and therefore that lack of knowledge of Western mysticism was not going to be a major obstacle. With the help of a well-read Catholic friend he overcame that obstacle:

> J'ai eu occasion, dans ces derniers mois, avec une chère amie française Catholique très fervente et instruite dans sa foi, - d'étudier les grands mystiques chrétiens du moyen âge et des derniers siècles, afin de les comparer aux mystiques indiens, auxquels je consacre un gros ouvrage. J'ai reconnu leur identité foncière; les différences sont secondaires, - (bien que les Eglises leur attribuent l'importance capitale); elles proviennent d'une volonté intellectuelle qui dirige l'élan mystique dans un sens donné d'avance; mais cet élan naturel est le même, à son départ, et procède de la même source d'âme.[45]

Rolland's decision to approach Indian thought in a comparative way stems from the conviction that too many Western Indologists have failed to present that thought in a way that is accessible to the majority of Western readers. Though he had great respect and admiration for the famous German Indologists, he could not help deploring the fact that their great studies being scientific and not synthetical were within the reach of a small number of readers and therefore Indian thought remained unknown to the majority of readers. In a letter to his friend Maurice Delamain he referred to the gap thus:

> Et plus grand malheur pour l'Inde est qu'elle a trop souvent été présentée à l'Occident par de grands Indologues sémites ou sémitisants géniaux philologues, mais hermétiquement fermés à la pensée profonde dont ils sont capables d'expliquer les mots - la surface des mots - même aux Indiens.[66]

He therefore tried to correct the mistake, for his aim was to popularize the universal values of Indian thought in a Europe that was ruining herself. He wanted to make it possible for the individual to get back his sense of direction:

> Moreover we are, in Europe - and in the whole world - at a time of social upheaval - at the close of one whirlwind of activity and at the commencement of a new one, even more formidable than the preceding - in which millions of men seek direction. One must try to give it to them as clearly, as simply and as succinctly as possible, and that without delay: for the cyclone will not wait.
>
> Hence the necessity to see that the ray which can illuminate the road on which these people must march be permitted to filter through from the sun of Truth.[67]

But to achieve this was no easy task. Without a sound knowledge of English Rolland had to rely entirely on his sister's help. The preparation was time-consuming and often a very frustrating one due to the delays regarding the procurement of documents from India. As we have mentioned earlier, it was Dhan Gopal Mukerji's book on Ramakrishna - The Face of Silence - that inspired Romain Rolland to write about the Indian mystic. After his visit to Romain Rolland in 1926, Mukerji left no stone unturned in his endeavour to help his French friend in his enterprise. On his return to India he put Rolland in touch with the Ramakrishna Order and supplied him with as many materials as he could find in his own collection. So did his other friend Kalidas Nag. On June 26, 1927, replying to the first letter of Swami Ashokananda he wrote:

> Voici un an que quelques pages de Dhan Gopal Mukerjee m'ont en effet révélé la grande âme de Sri Ramakrishna; et ce trait de lumière m'a incité à connaître sa vie et sa pensée. Depuis plusieurs mois nous lisons, ma soeur et moi, les livres publiés par le Prabuddha Bharata Office et par la Ramakrishna Mission, que des amis indiens ont eu l'amabilité de nous envoyer.''

Swami Ashokananda, the editor of Prabuddha Bharata (Awakened India), the main periodical of the Ramakrishna Mission, marvelled at the sudden but keen interest Rolland had taken in Ramakrishna's thought and lost no time in establishing contact with the latter to offer his help. So was Swami Shivananda, the direct disciple of Ramakrishna.

The two years of indefatigable devotion of Rolland and his sister, Madeleine, were however rewarding: right after their publication his two volumes on Indian thought were well received both in the West and in the East and it was undoubtedly with no mixed feelings that in 1936 he noted in his diary:

> Herbert, qui a voyagé dans l'Inde, dit combien ma popularité y est grande: la France est, pour les Indiens qu'il a vus, le pays de Romain Rolland. - Par le fait, mes livres sur l'Inde ont eu une pénétration profonde en Europe, et particulièrement en France: les comptes de librairie n'en donnent aucune idée.[69]

That his attempt at bringing home to the West the main tenets of Vedantic thought through syncretism was a successful one is beyond question. We should perhaps now focus our attention on his achievement.

It was as an unpretentious man who firmly believed in the validity of a synthesis of the world's thoughts that Romain Rolland entered upon Indian thought with persuasiveness, lucidity and an objectivity worthy of a great historian. Equipped with a good knowledge of Western philosophy and mysticism he was able to deal, in a way palatable to Western readers, with a spiritual subject which he described as: "l'exposé d'une haute pensée, religieuse, philosophique, morale et sociale qui, sortie du fond des siècles de l'Inde, s'adresse à l'humanité d'aujourd'hui."[70] However, his judgements were not without errors and he was fully aware of his liability to misinterpretations when he made the following apology in his foreword to Oriental readers:

> Je prie mes amis et lecteurs Indiens d'être indulgents aux erreurs que j'aurai pu commettre. Malgré toute la ferveur que j'ai apportée au travail, il est fatal qu'un homme de l'Occident donne, des hommes de l'Asie et de leurs expériences de pensée millénaire, des interprétations, maintes fois, erronées. Tout ce dont je puis témoigner, c'est ma sincérité et des efforts pieux que je fais pour entrer dans toutes les formes de vie.[71]

With his main erros we will deal hereafter.

Romain Rolland is right in believing that "toute la doctrine du Christ est diffuse avant lui dans l'âme orientale, ensemencée par les penseurs de Chaldée, d'Egypte, d'Athènes et d'Ionie."[72] With such a belief, it is but natural that he finds in Ramakrishna "un frère plus jeune de notre Christ"[73] and "le couronnement de deux mille ans de la vie intérieure d'un people de trois cent millions"[74] and whose thought he considers to be "le fruit d'un nouvel automne, un message nouveau de l'Ame, la symphonie de l'Inde..."[75]

In Ramakrishna's message or rather in Vedantic mysticism he has rediscovered something which was not totally unfamiliar to him: "la clef d'un escalier perdu, qui mène à quelques unes de ces âmes défendues.[76] His use of the verb 'rediscover' is meaningful: mysticism is no longer strange to him: "Rien de ce que j'ai vu là ne m'était paysage inconnu.[77] And again:

> Je ne cache point qu'arrivé à ce point de mes lectures j'ai fermé le livre, et que peut-être ne l'eussé-je point rouvert de longtemps, si je n'avais déjà su par certains mots, certains traits lumineux de la vie ultérieure, le faîte de sagesse où elle avait monté. A présent que j'ai achevé l'ascension tout entière, j'accepte et je comprends les chemins hasardeux par où elle m'a fait passer.[78]

Who among those who have studied mysticism in depth would dare question Rolland's claim? Let it be noted by the way, that the French writer fully shares with Rudolf Otto the view that as far as mysticism is concerned: "East is West, and West is East."[79] It is not impossible that he also shares with Ramakrishna the view that all religions lead to the same God by different paths since his (Rolland's) inclination for mysticism is so genuine.

Above all, Rolland's writings on Gandhi, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda are a continuation of his "Vies des hommes illustres" which was interrupted after the publication of his Vie de Michel Ange in 1907. As a biographer he had already shown his talents. The way he portrays his 'heros' by bringing out their salient qualities reminds us of some of the emminent biographers.

According to Coleridge "...the great end of biography, ...is to fix the attention, and to interest the feeling of men on those qualities and actions which... have made a particular life worthy of being recorded"[80] and this is precisely what Rolland has done in his biographies. Regarding Ramakrishna and Vivekananda it would be only fair to say that he has done more, for his aim was to bring from India "non le rêve immobile de l'infini, où se consume la pensée indienne, mais ceux qui du Rêve surent extraire les énergies, pour les jeter dans la cuve où s'amasse et bout la fonte de l'action: Gandhi, pasteur de peuples, et le héros Vivekananda."[81] Besides, he knew only too well that

Ramakrishna and Vivekananda had "réalisé, avec un charme et une puissance incomparable, cette splendide symphonie de l'Ame Universelle."[82] By bringing the thought that these two Indian 'héros' wanted to offer to Europe, he therefore aimed at "faire entendre le battement de l'artère aux oreilles de l'Europe fièvreuse, qui a tué le sommeil ...frotter ses lèvres, du sang de l'Immortalité."[83] As we have mentioned elsewhere for Rolland, India is above all "la brulante matrice des Dieux"[84] which for more than thirty centuries has been a spiritual land of the first order and the biographies of Gandhi, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda gave him an excellent opportunity not only to glorify the personalities of these Indian 'âmes-univers' but also to popularize their thought in the West by carefully and objectively comparing, defining, establishing parallels and throwing light upon the main tenets of Vedanta.

That there had been a serious attempt by poets, philosophers and mystics to popularize the Vedas during the nineteenth century was no secret to Romain Rolland but above all he was aware of the almost superhuman efforts made by Ramakrishna and his disciple-elect, Vivekananda, to unite the two warring camps, namely, the monists and the polytheists. Futile quarrels over questions of principles were unhealthy for a time of social and spiritual awakening, the mystic and his discipline firmly believed. It goes without saying that to Rolland, the efforts of the Indian mystic and his disciple were not only quite relevant but also highly commendable. Hence the keen interest he has taken in these two spiritual figures.

Romain Rolland on Ramakrishna

For Romain Rolland, Ramakrishna was, above all, a 'fleuve d'amour', a second Christ, whose love for mankind he wanted Europe to taste. Few knew better than he that that great river of love was the incontestable embodiment of "Hindu mysticism at its best and purest".[85] His studies of the Vedantic movement of modern India had led him to the conclusion that Ramakrishna and his disciples were the only ones among the prominent spiritual leaders of their time who stood for the realisation of cosmic unity which is precisely the end product or the realisation of the teachings of the Upanishads. By telling us the life story of Ramakrishna he has brought out the vitally important aspects of Vedantic teachings for the benefit of one and all: "Et j'ai puisé en lui un peu de son eau sacrée, afin de désalterer la grande soif du monde."[86] By the same token, he has revealed to us his intimate spiritual thought which, he was happy to observe, was very close to Ramakrishna's: "...l'auteur - Romain Rolland - a peut-être, dans cette oeuvre, livré plus de sa pensée métaphysique et religieuse que dans aucun autre de ses livres."[87] and in the very work itself he declares:

> Je vois le "Dieu" dans tout ce qui existe. Je le vois tout entier dans le moindre segment, comme dans le Tout Cosmique. Nulle diversité d'essence. Et quant à la puissance, elle est partout infinie: celle qui gît dans une pincée de poussière pourrait,

si l'on savait, faire sauter un monde."

Do Ramakrishna and his disciples think otherwise? Certainly not!

If there is a point on which Rolland and Ramakrishna are at one, it is evidently the idea that God is within us and manifests Himself through our love. Like Ramakrishna, he believes that all religions, even those that are still in their primitive forms, are good, provided that those who practice them do so with sincerity. He personally welcomes all the Gods (with the exception of the God of the Church) be they "le *mana* des Mélanésiens" "le *brahman* de l'Inde" or "les *numina* *latins*."

> Il va sans dire qu'adolescent je ne savais encore (ni n'osais) reconnaître ces dieux. Mais ils battaient en moi. Leur sang rythmait mon pouls fiévreux. Rien de commun entre ces Dieux, qui sont moi. Je suis eux - et le Dieu de La Bible, qui, par-dessus les palissades d'Eden barricadé (et l'ange dans sa guérite), me regarde en étranger... Notre polythésime ancestral, et la passion native de liberté, nous fait fraterniser, en Gaule, avec nos Dieux. Dieux ou hommes, ils sont nôtres: même farine; c'est d'elle et de nos "ahan!" qu'est pétri le pain de vie."

Rolland very aptly begins his life story of Ramakrishna by emphasizing the importance of love in spiritual attainment, for it was the love and devotion of the young elect for *Kali*, Goddess of the Universe that made of him a true *Bhakta* (Devotee) and thus prepared him for his meeting with *Brahman*, the indivisible (Advaita) Absolute. Hence the importance of *Kali*. As a *Bhakta* of this Goddess, Ramakrishna painfully but boldly went through a system of purification (Sadhana-Chatushtaya) which is the prerequisite that none of the spiritual aspirants can avoid. Rolland knows the importance of this stage of the *Bhakta's* pilgrimage only too well and he very aptly describes it for us when he writes:

> "Le passionné de la Déesse muette se consumait. L'atteindre, l'étreindre, lui dérober un signe de vie, un regard, un souffle, un sourire, était devenue l'unique but de l'existence. Il se vaudrait dans un coin sauvage du jardin, telle une jungle, méditant et pleurant, dépouillé de ses vêtements et du cordon sacré, qu'aucun brahmine ne doit jamais enlever; mais l'amour de la Mère lui avait révélé que qui veut penser à Dieu doit d'abord se dégager de tous ses préjugés."[10]

In other words the Spiritual aspirant must observe to the letter the principle of Sacrifice as stated in the third chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*. This principle emphasizes above all good actions and love of others and teaches that the fruit of the great Sacrifice is "La compassion, la Dévotion et la Renonciation"[11] as Romain Rolland has well understood it and as he wished the West to understand when he declares:

> "I do not suggest that Europeans should embrace an Asiatic faith, I would merely invite them to taste the delight of this rhythmic slow philosophy, this deep, slow breath of thought. From it they would learn those virtues which above all others the soul of Europe (and of America) needs today; tranquillity, patience, manly hope, unruffled joy, 'like a lamp in a windless place, that does not flicker' [*The Bhagavad Gita*]."[12]

Rolland's discussion on the two Vedantic schools namely, the *Advaita* (Non-dualistic) school of Shankara and the *Vicistadvaita* (Modified Monism) school of Ramanuja, is of utmost importance in that it dispels confusions regarding the interpretations of the Vedanta philosophy, and the precisions he brings on Ramakrishna's own attitude towards these schools explains his great admiration for the latter who "se fit, au cours de sa vie, une connaissance encylopédique des religions et des philosophies religieuses, sans cesse approfondie par sa méditation"[13] and who "reconnut que toutes les religions, par des chemins différents, menaient au même Dieu."[14] Nothing could please Rolland, the syncretist, more than this credo of Ramakrishna. Similarly interesting to Rolland was the mystic's Nirvikalpa Samadhi (advanced meditation without awareness of knower and known or subject or object) - the last stage in meditation which brings about the union with the absolute. Rolland cannot help describing this stage by quoting Ramakrishna himself:

> L'Univers s'éteignit. L'espace même n'était plus. D'abord des idées ombres flottaient encore sur le fond obscur de l'esprit. Seule, la faible conscience du Moi se répéta, monotone... Puis, cela aussi, s'arrêta. Resta seule l'Existence. L'âme se perdit dans le Soi. Tout dualisme s'effaça. L'Espace fini et l'espace infini ne furent qu'Un. Par-delà la parole, par-delà la pensée, il réalisa Brahman...[15]

The Nirvikalpa Samadhi is, according to Rolland, meaningful to the science of the Spirit probably because of the fact that it lends itself to scientific investigations: "...il appartient, non moins qu'aux textes saints de l'Inde, aux documents révélateurs pour les archives de la science de l'esprit, en Occident."[16] It is thus that the French author tries to dispel possible misinterpretations by intellectuals of the scientific West. The various samadhis through which the mystic goes before the final union with the Absolute, might be quite disturbing, he believes, to the Western mind which "ne connaît plus depuis longtemps les secousses du feu intérieur."[97] We should not be surprised, therefore, when we notice the numerous footnotes, explanations and comparisons. It is evident that what Romain Rolland wants to stress is that the union of the Infinite and the Finite makes all become identical. In other words, "Tout est Dieu. Et Dieu est Tout."[98] What Ramakrishna learnt after his *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* is meaningful not only to mystics but to mankind as a whole. Romain Rolland emphasizes the meaning thus:

> Mais il [Ramakrishna] savait aussi, désormais, que toutes les différences où les hommes s'entrechoquent, sont filles d'une même *Mère* - que la '*Toute Puissante Différenciation*' est le visage même de Dieu - qu'il faut aimer Dieu dans toutes les variétés des hommes, opposées et hostiles, dans toutes les formes de pensées qui commandent leur existence et souvent les mettent aux prises - et, avant tout, qu'il faut aimer les hommes *dans tous leurs Dieux*.[99]

This Vedantic message and its universal significance is but one of the many principles that explain the tremendous pain Rolland has taken to reveal to the West the validity of Indian thought.

Rolland's interest in Ramakrishna's preaching after his *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, is evidently aimed at showing to the West how much good the practical aspect of Vedanta could do in the field of mutual understanding. The presence of the "homme perdu en Dieu"[100] among his countrymen was a welcome one, since the Vedantic message he had to offer was one full of hope. First and foremost he preached brotherly love, for his experiences had more than convinced him that: "Dieu est dans tous les hommes; mais tous les hommes ne sont pas en Dieu: c'est pourquoi ils souffrent."[101] and that: "Point de miséricorde, mais le servir, le servir, en regardant l'homme comme Dieu!"[102] It is this cardinal message that appealed to his great disciple, Vivekananda, who enthusiastically declared to Swami Shivananda, a fellow disciple: "J'ai écouté aujourd'hui une haute parole... J'en proclamerai la vérité vivante au monde."[103] That decision formed the nucleus of his Vedantic Mission which he carried on beyond the boundaries of his native land. To Rolland, Ramakrishna on pilgrimages among his fellow countrymen spreading the Vedantic message of brotherly love and unity is: "Cette communion divine avec l'humanité vivante, aimante et souffrante, [qui] devait s'épanouir en un symbole pieux, pur et passionné."[104] Let it be noted, by the way, that this message of brotherly love and unity was already dear to Rolland who had dedicated his whole life to the reconciliation of mankind. Indeed, one may safely say that the theme of brotherhood of man broods over all his works. Who, among those who had known him personally, would deny that he actually practiced brotherly love in life? He tells us that his "Poverello" - (Ramakrishna) was all love and kindness. But he himself had not only emphasized the principle of love in his novels, but also did put it into practice; it would be wrong to think that he ever, even briefly, lost faith in that principle.

Ramakrishna in action meant, above all, the message of love, peace and unity among men and the modesty and humility with which he approached each and everyone to share his knowledge of the Divine could not fail to attract the attention of not only men of Romain Rolland's calibre but also of the laymen. It is the universal import of his message that Rolland wants the West to understand when he remarks: "Et il en partagera l'aliment d'immortalité, en une Cène non de douze apôtres, mais de toutes les âmes affamées - avec l'univers."[105] Through his conversations with the prominent religious leaders of Bengal, Ramakrishna had become aware of the "insuffisance de leur sagesse et du grand vide affamé de l'âme de l'Inde..."[106] Hence his tireless endeavour to spread his message. In his chapter on the part played by the Brahmosamaj (Religious Reform Movement) in the spiritual evolution of India, Rolland underlines the fact that Ramakrishna was successful in enlarging the horizon of the minds of the leaders of the Samaj when he pointed out that they had:

> su profiter de son passage parmi eux. Leur cerveau et leur coeur en ont été élargis. L'influence de Ramakrishna a fait, plus qu'aucune autre, pour réintégrer à la pensée de son peuple la pensée d'une élite indienne que le premier afflux de demi-science, mal assimilée, d'Occident, risquait de désaxer."[107]

Indeed the leaders of the different Indian religious schools were indebted to Ramakrishna for having shown them the true path to unity - the path which their endless divisions on the question of the principles of interpretations had made it impossible for them to see. The spiritual leader achieved this by liberating them from fruitless discussions: "Ces intellectuels qui s'ankylosent dans la gouttière de leur raison leurs membres et il les assouplit - de leurs raisons - il libère. Il les arrache aux discussions abstraites 'Vivez, aimez, et créez'... Leur sang se remet à couler."[108] Naturally, Ramakrishna had no ill feelings for the Brahmosamajists even if he did not approve of the pride of some of them. Rolland reminds us of this when he points out that his hero never failed to show his esteem for the Brahmo Samaj and that the Brahmos venerated him and benefited from his intercourse with them. His success in showing them the right path is symbolised by his greatest disciple, Vivekananda, once a Brahmosamajist himself. If such a stubborn Brahmosamajist and votary of Western reason as Vivekananda had finally thrown himself at the feet of Ramakrishna, it was simply because, like many other Samajists, he had realized that the Paramahamsa was right in insisting that underneath those very theories which seemed abstract and confusing to them there lay the same Truth that every spiritual man seeks and that leads to the divine union. To Ramakrishna the Brahmosamajists were a lost elite and therefore he deemed it his bounden duty to bring them back to the fold. In other words, he showed to the Samajists who were wrongly influenced by Western science, that they would achieve nothing in the spiritual field by keeping away from the masses whose thought, he (Ramakrishna) was advocating. The union of the Brahmosamajists and the masses was no doubt the realisation of Ramakrishna's dearest dream and for the future of India it certainly meant a great deal. In this great achievement, Rolland salutes the independence of Indian thought and hope for reconciliation when he comments: "A ce réveil hindou, la vraie pensée d'Occident n'a rien perdu. Mais la pensée d'Orient a maintenu son indépendance. C'est entre personnalités égales et libres que pourra désormais s'effectuer l'union."[109] It was high time that such a reawakening took place in India, for it brought about the unity the country so badly needed not only for spiritual and social progress but for political strength as well. Rolland welcomes this reawakening for he believes that spiritual independence and national unity enable the East to face the West on an equal basis instead of "l'assujetissement de l'une à l'autre, et l'assassinat d'une des deux civilisations."[110] Hence the importance of Ramakrishna's great achievement.

On the personal level, Ramakrishna had more to gain than to lose in his relationship with the Brahmosamajists. While acquainting himself with the problems facing these spiritual leaders, he discovered the path along which he had to carry his mission. In other words, he found the right path for a successful mission which was to dedicate himself entirely to others for his God demanded of him:

> ...l'amour et le service des hommes. Ses luttes spirituelles, ses extases ses réalisations n'étaient point pour son profit... [mais] pour le développement humain, pour une ère nouvelle de "Réalisation spirituelle."[111]

Such was the aim of his mission and he wasted no time to set himself on the path he had just discovered. As was expected of him he began in complete humility, mixing "de plein-pied avec ses jeunes disciples, il est leur compagnon, leur frère; ils causent familièrement. Point de supériorité!"[112] Nor was the relationship between the Paramahamsa and his young disciples that of teacher and pupil or that of preacher and laymen. It was truly on a brotherly level that he offered them "cet état d'abondance intérieure, de richesse vitale épurée, qu'on nomme spiritualité. ...'comme on donne une fleur.'"[113] What would perhaps seem incredible is the fact that he did not even impose the belief in God upon his disciples nor did he demand of them hard sacrifices. Whatever he asked them to do was what they could do without any special effort and as far as God is concerned, he advised them to reach Him through "l'experimentation personnelle. Expérimenter d'abord, et puis après croire en Dieu"[114] for it was his profound conviction that belief in God should always follow religious experience. Regarding the Nirvikalpa Samadhi (the highest Ecstasy) which he had experienced and from which he was extremely lucky to return, he forbade his disciples to lose themselves in it for their task is to "se tenir, ici-bas, à la station avant-dernière, qui est l'état où l'on s'unifie avec toutes les choses vivantes, avec toutes les réalités; et c'est proprement *l'Illumination*. Nous y pouvons tous aspirer et y guider les autres. Nous le devons..."[115] The question of how the disciples can guide others to illumination necessitates a reference to "la parole salvatrice"[116] that Ramakrishna wanted his disciples to take to mankind. The task of the disciples consisted in preaching that all religions are true as far as their essence and the sacred faith of their believes are considered; that the three schools of metaphysical thought namely - Dualism, Modified Monism, Absolute Monism - are but stages that lead to supreme Truth and complete rather than contradict each other; that man has to live in this world by fulfilling his task with affectionate zeal, without attachment and gradually and patiently make his way towards liberation by love and purity. Romain Rolland's interpretation of Ramakrishna's aim is so just that we find nothing better than to quote him:

> Et il lui faut chercher ceux qui sont à l'avant-dernière étape, pour fonder avec eux - c'est sa mission propre et le désir de la Mère - un ordre nouveau d'hommes qui se transmettent et qui enseignent au Monde le mot de vérité qui contient tous les autres. Et ce mot est: "Universel" Union et Unité de tous les élans d'amour et de connaissance, de toutes les formes d'humanité. Jusqu'à ce jour, chacun n'a cherché à réaliser qu'un seul type de l'Etre. Il faut les réaliser tous. C'est le devoir présent. Et l'homme qui y parvient, en s'identifiant avec tous et chacun de ses frères vivants, en épousant leurs yeux, leurs sens, leur cerveau et leur coeur, est le pilote et le guide, dont a besoin l'âge nouveau.[117]

The significance of this interpretation is noteworthy for he who can see the universal import of Ramakrishna's aim can also see the validity of Vedantic thought. Rolland, to say the least, has very well grasped the full meaning of his spiritual hero's aim and his essay on Vivekananda is a good proof that he has seen in this great disciple of the Paramahamsa, "le pilote et le guide, dont a besoin l'âge nouveau."[118] Let it be noted that Rolland was one of those "libres esprits de l'Occident"[119] to whose thought Ramakrishna's message was familiar for they too had "perçu, par la raison ou par l'amour, l'unité des êtres vivants."[120] Had Ramakrishna cut himself completely from the masses, his being "en contact permanent avec l'Absolu"[121] would have certainly meant less to Rolland to whom the main task of the humanist consists in "harmoniser les deux activités fondamentales de l'homme: la pensée et l'action."[122] In fact, Rolland never stopped believing in the effectiveness of "La synthèse des éléments opposés"[123] (Le Voyage Intérieur p. 234) in bringing about harmony. It is chiefly because he had seen this synthesis in Ramakrishna and Vivekananda that he made of them spiritual heroes. It was not simply the universal wisdom of Ramakrishna's thought that was relevant to him: he also admired the miraculous energy that the physically weak transcendental man could generate: "Aucun mot, chez lui n'était mot; tout était acte, tout était être."[124] he rightly remarks. Furthermore, what was admirable in Ramakrishna, was the cheerful optimism with which he dealt with one and all. Rolland underlines this rare quality when he writes: "Nul vague - à - l'âme, nulle tristesse. Un mot, un sourire, le toucher de sa main, communiquait la paix, le bonheur sans nom après lequel on languissait."[125] Such was the spiritual hero and the nucleus of his message lies in the belief that we can realize the Absolute but through action. To his great admirer, Rolland, the spiritual man par excellence was:

> L'élan de l'eau qui dévalait joyeusement se communiquait à toutes les âmes. Il était l'élan, il était la pente, il était le courant; et vers son fleuve les autres rivières et les ruisseaux accouraient. Il était le Gange.[126]

In short, according to Rolland, Ramakrishna represented in the most fitting way the marriage between action and divine contemplation. By action we mean, as does Rolland, the action prescribed by the Gita namely, action "en dehors de tout attachement et seulement pour le bien du monde"..."[127] Both for Ramakrishna and for Rolland, then, there is no question of God in pure isolation or in pure inactivity. They believe in the fact that a spiritual man can practice divine contemplation without breaking his ties with humanity. It is precisely this fact that encouraged Rolland to make the following comment on Sri Aurobindo in spite of his respect for the latter's philosophical ideas:

> Mais si je lui consens à lui faire crédit, j'ai peine à lui pardonner son aristocratisme. C'est un Ashram pour les riches. En notre époque de douloureux combats pour diminuer la misère et l'oppression, il est terriblement égoïste de s'enfermer dans son Ashram capitonné, pour y chercher la plénitude de son développement non contrarié. Ce sont là jeux de privilégiés. - J'ai beau être solicité d'écrire une suite à mes livres

> sur les grands penseurs de l'Inde moderne, j'en resterai au Poverello du Bengale, Ramakrishna.[128]

According to Ramakrishna, there are two types of perfect men in this world: those contemplators who "quand ils atteignent la Vérité, savourent silencieusement leur joie sans en parler à personne"[129] and those who "ayant atteint cette même Vérité, ne peuvent garder leur bonheur pour eux seuls et crient à tue-tête: 'Vous tous, venez et jouissez de la Vérité avec moi'."[130] That Rolland made of Ramakrishna a hero chiefly because the latter belonged to the second type of perfect men is evident. It was mainly due to this broadheartedness of Ramakrishna, that he had a group of faithful disciples gathered around him and that he was able to make of Vivekananda his worthy successor to "semer sur le monde le grain de sa pensée."[131]

Romain Rolland on Vivekananda

What Rolland saw in Ramakrishna, he saw in Vivekananda in addition to other praiseworthy qualities. Besides being the most faithful disciple to take over the spiritual heritage of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda was "physiquement et moralement son antithèse absolue."[132] But what is more interesting is that Ramakrishna himself had recognized the "lumière éclatante"[133] in Vivekananda as soon as he saw him for the first time and did not hesitate to elect the young disciple to succeed him later. The master had made no mistake: what he was physically unable to achieve, the elected disciple performed admirably well not only in his motherland but all over the world.

As the "nouvel Oedipe,"[134] Vivekananda, achieved a heroic task. With but God as his inseparable companion, he carried his mission like a true spiritual leader. Rolland emphasizes Vivekananda's humility and modesty with which the latter accomplished his task when he writes:

> Il n'était pas seulement l'humble petit frère, qui couche dans les étables ou sur les grabats des gueux. Il était de plein-pied avec tous. Aujourd'hui, mendiant insulté, que recueillent les parias. Demain, hôtes des princes, conservant en égal avec les premiers ministres et les maharajahs. Frère des opprimés, penché sur leur misère. Sondant le luxe des grands, éveillant dans leur âme engourdie le souci du bien public. Contrôlant d'aussi près la science des pandits que les problèmes de l'économie industrielle et rurale, qui commandent la vie des peuples. Enseignant, s'instruisant. Et, pas à pas, se faisant la Conscience de l'Inde, son Unité et ses Destins. Ils s'incarnaient en lui. Et le monde les vit, en Vivekananda.[135]

Who would deny the great influence of Ramakrishna on his dear disciple in what Rolland is telling us here? Indeed, Vivekananda was a living example of Ramakrishna's teachings which were, let it be noted, the very best that the Vedantic philosophy can offer for the redemption of mankind. That Vivekananda was the most competent disciple to assume the responsibilities of a great spiritual leader, Ramakrishna was very much aware of when he said: "Il est comme ces gros troncs d'arbres qui portent sur le Gange les hommes et les bêtes"[136] and the achievements of Vivekananda are here to prove that the great Master was right since his first meeting with the disciple.

Vivekananda's mission work across India was quite revealing and rewarding. Like his master he learned much from his contacts with rich and poor, laymen and spiritual men. In other words, he acquired a sound knowledge of the economic, social and spiritual problems of his country. As a spiritual leader he was gratified to find that the light emanating from the Vedas and on which the success of his whole mission depended, was still alive for, as Rolland remarks: "Du Nord au Sud, la terre antique de l'Inde était plein de Dieux; et la chaîne ininterrompue de leurs bras innombrables ne faisait qu'un Seul Dieu."[137] With this "Seul Dieu" of the Vedas, both Ramakrishna and Vivekananda had achieved union and both felt it was their duty to show to one and all the path to that union. As far as Vivekananda himself is concerned he realized the divine unity in communion with the living:

> Il la réalisait également dans la communion des vivants de toutes castes et hors castes. Et il leur enseignait à la réaliser. Il leur portait, de l'un à l'autre, la compréhension mutuelle, aux esprits forts, aux intellectualistes épris de l'abstrait, le respect pour les images, les Dieux idoles, - aux jeunes hommes, le devoir de l'étude des grands vieux livres du passé, - les Védas, les Puranas, les annales anciennes - et plus encore, leur peuple d'aujourd'hui, - à tous, le religieux amour de la mère Inde et la passion de se consacrer à sa rédemption.[138]

Such was the mission of the great disciple and we need hardly say that it is imbued with the best part of the Master's thought. Like the Master, he believed that all religions are good and that they all lead to the same "Dieu sans forme l'Innommable, l'Illimité..."[139]

It was always this cardinal Vedantic belief that served the soul of the young spiritual leader with the energy, so characteristic of him. It should be noted that without such a belief, his mission would never have met with the least success.

Rolland seems to have paid particular attention to the impact Vivekananda's travels had on his mind and to the message the latter had for people outside his own country. The French biographer welcomes the fact that his hero had considered the scientific, social and spiritual aspects of Western Society with a remarkable broadmindedness, enthusiasm and admiration, when he comments on the latter's first visit to the United States thus:

> Tout lui est neuf et le frappe de stupeur. Il n'eût jamais imaginé la puissance, la richesse, le génie d'invention de ce monde d'Occident. D'une vitalité plus forte et plus sensible à la force d'un Tagore, qu'un Gandhi, oppressés par la frénésie de mouvement et de bruit, par le machinisme européo-américain (surtout américain), Vivekananda y respire à l'aise; il en subit la griserie exaltante, et son premier élan est de juvénile adhésion; il ne ménage point son admiration.[140]

One should not be surprised to find Rolland welcoming thus the enthusiasm of his hero in the presence of Western materialism if we bear in mind the fact that his hope for a better world was based on a fusion of that materialism with Eastern spirituality.

What Rolland tells us in the above comment may well be applied to Vivekananda's impressions of England, France and

Italy. On the human level, his admiration went to all the nations he visited and on the spiritual level, Rolland joyfully welcomes his admiration for Christ when he remarks that "aucun être ne lui était aussi proche que le Christ"[141] and expresses his deep conviction of his being the most qualified man to bridge the East and the West when he declares: "Et rien ne fait mieux sentir que le grand Médiateur entre le Dieu et l'homme est appelé à être aussi entre l'Orient et l'Occident, puisque l'Orient le reconnaît, à bon droit, comme sien."[142] But what did Vivekananda have to offer to the West if not the very thing at Rolland would have expected him to bring, namely "sang de l'Immortalité."[143] There was no doubt in Rolland's mind that India's spiritual message was going to have a potent and beneficent impact on "L'Europe fiévreuse"[144] of his time. Hence his emphasis on Vivekananda's message which was nothing but Vedantic thought. The religion that Vivekananda was preaching was universal in every sense of the word. In other words, it was all-embracing, extremely tolerant and harmony-oriented. Hence the deep impression his message left upon the delegates of the Parliament of Religions of Chicago in 1893. Reminding us of that impression, Rolland writes:

> Chacun des orateurs avait parlé de son Dieu, du Dieu de sa secte. Lui - lui seul - parlait de leurs Dieux à tous, et les embrassait dans l'Etre universel. C'était le souffle de Ramakrishna qui, par la bouche de son grand disciple, faisait tomber les frontières. Pour un instant, il n'y eut plus de Pyrénées! Le Parlement des Religions fit une ovation au jeune orateur.[145]

What Rolland is saying here is far from being an exaggeration when considered in the light of the following declaration made by Vivekananda before the Parliament:

> The Parliament of Religions... has proved... that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character... Upon the banner of every religion will soon be written in spite of ...resistence: 'Help and Not Fight.' 'Assimilation and Not Destruction.' 'Harmony and Peace and Not Dissension.'[146]

Besides, the press did not turn a deaf ear to these powerful words. One daily, *The New York Herald*, paying due tribute to the spiritual leader and to India wrote that "He is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him, we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation."[147] Considering the fact that he was an unofficial representative of his country at the Parliament, his contribution was indeed a feat.

After his fruitful journey to the West, Vivekananda went back to India to continue his mission with renewed vigour for his visit to the West had made him "sentir plus profondément la personnalité de l'Inde. Et celle-ci, par contraste, lui fait valoir la forte et multiple personnalité de l'Occident. Et toutes les deux lui apparaissent nécessaires. Et toutes les deux, complémentaires, réclament le mot qui les relie, l'Evangile commun, lui tracent la route qu'il doit ouvrir."[148] Though the task was Herculean, the great leader lost no time to embark upon a country-wide campaign for the reawakening of the people and for the unity of the nation, without neglecting, however, the Vedantic principles to which he was to remain faithful till the end. After his four years of successful mission abroad, it was to be expected that his new mission at home was going to take a more vigorous form. While reading his speeches one cannot help feeling, as did Rolland himself, the thunderous tone on which he addressed his fellow-countrymen to wake them up. By the way of example, we borrow the following words from Rolland's numerous quotations:

> Arise, awake, and sleep not till the goal is reached. None is really weak! The soul is infinite, omnipotent, and omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself, proclaim the God within you, do not deny him! ...It's a man-making religion that we want... It is man-making education all around that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. And here is the test of truth - anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually and spiritually, reject as poison, there is no life in it, it cannot be true. Truth is strengthening. Truth is purity, truth is all-knowledge... truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be invigorating...[49]

It is words like these that fascinated Rolland to the point of urging him to make the following confession:

> Ces mots ensevelis sous le linceul des livres, à trente ans de distance, je ne puis y toucher, sans en recevoir au corps une commotion électrique. Quelles secousses, quels transports ont-ils dû provoquer, quand ils sortaient, brûlants, de la poitrine du héros![50]

The spiritual message of Vivekananda is laden with energy emanating for an extraordinarily courageous man to whom weakness was the deadliest poison, to be avoided at all costs. But regarding God, he strongly advised one and all to find Him everywhere and in everything even in the worst of what we refer to as misfortunes; for He is all-embracing and limitless. Rolland's admiration of the great courage and the wisdom of his powerful words is so deep that he cannot help making the following laudatory remark in reference to Vivekananda's concept of the omnipresence of God:

> Nous retrouvons ici, à son paroxysme la volonté d'héroïsme, qui est l'âme de toute l'action de Vivekananda. La Vérité impavide, qui se refuse à toute atténuation, qui veut qu'on la contemple dans sa terrible nudité. La Foi qui n'attend rien, en retour de son don gratuit-.'[51]

That he approves of this noble attitude of his hero is no surprise to readers of the essay we are dealing with, for in his foreword to his Eastern readers he makes the following unequivocal statement:

> D'accord avec les Védantists pour admettre que le divin est dans l'Ame, et que l'âme est dans tout - que l'Atman est Brahman - je n'ai pas besoin d'enfermer Dieu entre les frontières d'un homme privilégié: c'est encore, à mes yeux, une forme (qui s'ignore) de 'nationalisme' de l'esprit; et je ne l'accepte point. Je vois le 'Dieu' dans tout ce qui existe. Je le vois tout entier dans le moindre segment, comme dans le Tout Cosmique.'[52]

There was no doubt whatsoever in Rolland's mind that Vivekananda's was the kind of personality that the West badly needed. Besides, had he not seen in his hero an elder brother who not only represented in the most fitting way a striking example of a true Vedantist in action but also who had "réalisé le plus haut équilibre de l'homme moderne entre les forces de sa pensée"[53] fully and who was one of the first to have "signé la paix des deux puissances, dont nous sommes le champ de bataille: la raison et la foi"[154] so well? Another significant characteristic of his hero which he admired equally is the latter's attitude towards freedom. Ever faithful to Vedantic principles, he was naturally a staunch votary of freedom and he strongly upheld the Upanishadic notion that the whole universe rests in freedom: "In freedom it rises, in freedom it rests and into freedom it melts away."[155] Rolland shares his hero's belief that freedom is the unique condition for spiritual progress. Furthermore, he points out that:

> Le véritable esprit védantique ne part point d'un système d'idées préconçues. Il est d'une absolue liberté, et d'une hardiesse sans égale parmi les religions, à l'égard des faits d'observation et des hypothèses proposées pour les coordonner.[156]

The question of freedom had always been dear to Rolland. Hence his emphasis on the Vedantic concept of freedom. Everything is valueless without freedom he believes: "S'il est un sentiment qui me soit essentiel c'est celui de la Liberté. Sans elle, rien n'a de prix..."[157] Rolland could not have written about Ramakrishna without talking of Vivekananda for the former was the "body" and the latter the "head". Spiritually they were complementary. However, it was the personality of Vivekananda that was more relevant to Rolland's Europe for he was convinced that "le visage de la pensée de Vivekananda est parent du nôtre, de nos besoins, de nos tourments, de nos aspirations et de nos doutes, qui s'en vont, comme la taupe aveugle, fouissant d'instinct leur chemin vers la lumière."[158] By "pensée" Rolland really means: "la pensée védantique, telle qu'elle s'exprime, à l'heure présente, par la bouche de Vivekananda."[159] To his interpretation of that "pensée" we will now turn.

Rolland's "L'évangile universel de Vivekananda"[160] forming the second part of his work on Vivekananda is the fruit of his serious investigation of Vedantic thought in the light of the Swami's teachings and not at all an attempt to "discuter de l'hindouisme."[161] To begin with an interpretation of the *Maya* (Illusion) is certainly not a random choice on the part of the writer. In other words, we mean that Rolland begins with this concept of illusion because evidently it is this very concept that has been the most wrongly interpreted in the West in spite of its being an ever-present law in the world as we know it. Rolland is very much aware of the fact that *Maya* lends itself to equivocal interpretations when he remarks:

> Nous lui prêtons à tort le sens de totale Illusion, d'hallucination pure, de vaine fumée sans feu: ce qui nous engage à conserver de l'homme d'Orient l'opinion dépréciatrice qu'impuissant à étreindre comme nous la réalité de la vie, il n'y voit rien de plus que l'étoffe d'un rêve et qu'en un demi-sommeil, immobile, étendu fixant les abîmes bleus, il laisse flotter le songe de la vie, comme voguent dans l'air d'automne les fils d'araignées voyageuses.[162]

Knowing about such misinterpretations, Rolland wisely chooses to remain "fidèle à la vraie pensée du grand Védantisme moderne, tel qu'il s'est incarné en Vivekananda."[163] His hero had given four lectures on *Maya* in London in 1896. At one with his hero, he maintains that *Maya* is what we are, what we see and what we experience in this world and that the only word capable of defining it is 'Relativity'. According to Vedantic Advaitism (absolute and impersonal monism), *Maya* cannot be defined either by existence or non-existence. Rolland therefore concludes that it is the Relative, that is, the intermediary between the Being and the non-Being. Vedanta calls it a game of the Absolute and as such forms the real world as we know it. Needless to say, that one has to detach himself from this world in order to reach the Absolute. That is what Rolland means by: "Mais pour les coeurs puissants, il n'est d'existence digne de ce nom que l'Absolu. Il leur faut le saisir et échapper à la Roue."[144] How and where to find the path of freedom, asks Rolland. He finds nothing better than the following Vedic message: "Mieux vaut mourir sur le champ de bataille que de vivre une vie de défaite"[145] which Vivekananda attributes to Buddha and which he believes is the motto of all religions. To those who believe that freedom is the monopoly of God or the Gods, Rolland suggests Vivekananda's message of hope: "...Tous marchent donc vers la liberté. Nous voyageons tous vers la liberté"[146] and he specifies that this quest for freedom does not even involve science or religion, unreason or reason, good or evil, hate or love for according to Vivekananda: "tous les êtres sans exception entendent la voix qui les appelle à la liberté."[147] Rolland approves of his hero's mission when he asserts that the task of the spiritual leaders is to "faire

connaître aux hommes affolés que, par mille voies plus ou moins sûres, plus ou moins droites, ils y vont tous - et de les aider à se dégager des fondrières où ils piétinent, et des fourrés où ils se déchirent, en leur montrant parmi ces milliers de voies, les plus directes, les *Viae Romanae*, les routes royales, les grands *Yogas*: - le travail (*Karmayoga*), l'Amour (*Bhaktiyoga*), la Connaissance (*Jñânayoga*)."[168] Obviously, Rolland did not waste his time by turning to Vedanta to find ways of helping mankind to free itself from the "fondrières" and the "fourrés". At this point we deem it fitting to consider his interpretation of the four main *Yogas*. According to the great modern Indian philosopher S. Radhakrishnan, Yoga "means the process, as well as the result, of balancing the different sides of our nature, body, mind and spirit, the objective and subjective, the individual and the social, the finite and the infinite."[169] It is worth mentioning that herein lies the great importance Vedantists attach to *yoga*, the practice of which enables the yogi to become *jivanmukta* (liberated while still living).

As in the case of *Maya*, Rolland begins his interpretation of the four well-selected yogas namely *Karmayoga* (work without selfishness), *Bhaktiyoga* (devotion), *Rajayoga* (initiation) and *Jñanayoga* (wisdom), by deploring the gross misinterpretations and exploitation of the yoga system in the West. He sees in the yogas what the great Vedantists themselves see in them, namely, "...une discipline d'esprit"[170] and he is evidently very much aware of the fact that the teachings of Vivekananda are based on the above mentioned four yogas which he rightly calls the "quatre Evangiles de Vivekananda."[171]

Rolland's preference for the *Karmayoga* is meaningful. Besides seeing in it "l'accent... le plus profond"[172] he knows better than anybody else that it is the one that would appeal most to the Westerner. It is the "Evangile du Travail"[173] par excellence for as he points out it is the *Karmayoga* which "nous révèle le sens, le secret, la méthode du travail, son pouvoir organisateur. Le travail est inévitable; mais nous devons travailler pour le but le plus haut..."[174] To be more precise regarding the aim of our duty, he finds nothing better than to quote the following message of *Karmayoga*:

> Travailler sans cesse, mais renoncez à tout attachement au travail! Que votre esprit reste libre! ...Ne projetez pas sur lui cette tentacule d'égoïsme: Moi... Mien!...[175]

If Vivekananda emphasizes the importance of this yoga it is evidently because of the priority he gives to action in his teachings. Rolland makes no mistake when he makes the following remarks: "Comme sa religion est d'essence pratique et réalisatrice, comme elle vise constamment à l'action..."[176] However, both Vivekananda and Rolland believe that the idea of complete human detachment is beyond most men and can lead to the destruction of social action if misinterpreted. But Rolland has faith in the principle of true *Karmayoga* namely, "travailler libre, travailler par la liberté, travailler comme un maître et non comme un esclave."[177] Furthermore, he believes that if this principle is adapted to modern society what could be achieved is "le relèvement des masses honteusement trahies, exploitées, dégradées, par ceux qui auraient dû se faire leurs guides et leurs soutiens."[178] There is no doubt in his mind as to the effectiveness of the principle. His conclusion speaks for itself: "Aucune doctrine religieuse n'a montré tant de compréhension sympathique pour les besoins spirituels de chacun, du plus humble au plus haut."[179] To dispel any doubt regarding the possible success of Karmayoga in the West, he offers, as a living example, his sixty years of uninterrupted working life. He believes that it is quite possible for everyone to work for the well-being of humanity without any selfish aim. Like generations of silent workers, he feels he has contributed much through his work when he tells us that:

> Tout du long de sa tâche et penché sur lui-même, tandis qu'il s'efforçait de saisir la voix intérieure, il écoutait monter celle de ces anonymes, qui bruit comme une mer nourricière des nuées et des rivières - ce peuple muet dont la conscience inexprimée est la substance de mes pensées et commande ma volonté. Dès que s'éteignent les bruits de dehors, j'entends battre son pouls dans la nuit.[180]

Thus, it was impossible for a man like Rolland not to recommend Karmayoga to the West.

Rolland is not wrong in believing that Karmayoga would appeal to a reason-oriented West nor does he err when he expresses fear regarding the reception of Bhaktiyoga. He very wisely asks reason-oriented intellectuals not to give up their path of reason for Bhaktiyoga, the path that leads to Truth through love of God. But he blames them for denouncing the dangers of servitude and error that the way of the heart may lead to for, according to him the same dangers may appear in the path of intellectual knowledge. He reminds them that mystic pilgrims of the West and their thousands of followers have practiced Bhaktiyoga under different names safely by staying within certain limits. Interpreting Vivekananda, the fearless unmasker of religious dishonesty, he concludes that: "La force, la virile raison, le souci constant du bien universel, et un désintéressement entier, voilà les conditions pour arriver au but. Et il en est encore une: celle de vouloir y arriver."[181] Rolland, like his hero, had always been a fierce enemy of pseudo-religious men. Hence the great importance he attaches to the conditions connected with Bhaktiyoga. To the sceptical rationalist intellectuals of the West, he offers the following explanation of Vivekananda:

> La première condition est que l'inspiration ne contredise pas la raison. De même que le vieillard ne contredit pas l'enfant, mais est son développement, ce que nous appelons inspiration est le développement de la raison. Le chemin de l'intuition passe par la raison si l'inspiration contredit la raison, jetez-la par-dessus bord!
>
> Deuxièmement cette inspiration doit avoir en vue le bien de chacun et de tous, non la renommée ou le gain personnel. Son bienfait doit toujours avoir un caractère universel, et le désintéressement de l'inspiré doit être absolu.[182]

When we consider the fact that the French biographer wants his Western reader to pay particular attention to this explanation in which he sees the language of a rationalist we cannot but conclude that he is implying that, after all, Bhaktiyoga too is practicable in the West provided the above-mentioned conditions are complied with.

Rolland considers the third yoga, Rajayoga as "...la voie propre de Vivekananda"[183] for it is the way of Discrimination (Viveka) and according to the latter, it is the yoga that can help unite the West and the East. As such, Rolland naturally finds in it, the yoga *par excellence*. Besides, it is the yoga which "a pour champ d'action le contrôle et la maîtrise absolus de l'esprit - condition première de toute connaissance. Et il y conduit par la concentration."[184] His hero calls it the psychological yoga and he hardly disagrees with him when he remarks: "Si yoga a pour signification l'union avec l'objet (et sujet) suprême de la Connaissance, le Rajayoga est la méthode expérimentale psycho-physiologique pour y parvenir directement."[185] Furthermore, he approves of Vivekananda's emphasis on the practice of Rajayoga for the achievement of absolute concentration and mastery of mind. Herein, he believes, lies the importance of this yoga to all seekers after truth whether of the West or of the East. Having himself derived profit from his analysis of this yoga, he strongly recommends it to Western scientists dealing with the neo-psychology based on the physiology of the mind.

Closely bound to the Rajayoga is the Jñânayoga in which Rolland finds a rationalistic and philosophical yoga for it is the path that involves discrimination or philosophical analysis and experimentation. This particular yoga is very dear to the Swami, the great Discriminator, who considers religion as a science. Rolland rightly asserts that the scientific and rational aspect of this yoga makes it easily accessible to Western scientists. He believes that as the "méthode de la haute intelligence",[186] its starting point and its means are meaningful to the scientific spirit of the West. Vivekananda would have certainly shared this assumption for he firmly believed that: "La religion traite des vérités du monde métaphysique, tout comme la chimie et les sciences naturelles traitent des vérités du monde physique."[187] When Rolland tells us that Jñânayoga "est la méthode la plus sûre pour pénétrer jusqu'aux faits élémentaires"[188] he interprets the views of all great Vedantists unerringly and when he concludes that this yoga is "au préalable, une critique serrée des conditions de la connaissance: temps, espace, causalité, etc. Et reconnaît exactement les frontières de l'esprit, avant de les franchir"[189] he clearly shows how well he has understood its scientific aspect. That he recommends the Jñânayoga to Western intellectuals goes without question.

Rolland makes it clear to his European friends that by analysing the yoga system he has not tried to prove its truthfulness for it is a hypothesis like any other system.

What he has tried to show, he maintains, is the greatness of the hypothesis and its metaphysical explanation of the universe which is not "en désaccord, sur le plan des faits, avec les récentes données admises par la science occidentale d'aujourd'hui."[190]

Rolland's consideration of Vivekananda's Universal Science-Religion is elucidatory. First and foremost he draws our attention to the all-embracing aspect of the Swami's concept of religion when he points out that for the latter religion is synonymous with universalism of the spirit and that each religion must necessarily attain to this universalism in order to realize its fullness. To be able to achieve this fullness one has to harmonize science and religion, the "deux frères en procès, qui se disputent un champ, et dont la parfaite exploitation exige leurs efforts associés."[191] To bring about this harmony, Vivekananda believes that Europe needs a rationalistic religion and that type of religion is to be found in _Advaita_ (Non-Dualistic, Impersonal, Absolute) _Vedanta_ which, as Rolland points out, is a _modus vivendi_ between scientific materialism and religion - a solution found "depuis longtemps, dans l'histoire humaine."[192] To convince us that such a solution has already proved itself, he quotes the following statement of his hero:

> L'Advaita a deux fois sauvé l'Inde du matérialisme. Par la venue de Bouddha, qui est apparu aux temps du matérialisme le plus hideux et le plus répandu... Par la venue de Çankara, qui, alors que le matérialisme avait reconquis l'Inde, démoralisant

> les classes supérieures et imprégnant de superstitions les classes inférieures, a revivifié le Vedanta, en en faisant surgir une philosophie rationaliste... Nous voulons aujourd'hui ce soleil éclatant de l'intellectualisme, joint au coeur de Bouddha, ce coeur merveilleux, infini, de miséricorde et d'amour. Cette union nous donnera la plus haute philosophie. La science et la religion se rencontreront et se donneront la main."[113]

There is no doubt in the minds of the Swami and Rolland that the salvation of Europe depends on that harmonious union of science and religion and that Advaita Vedanta, being all-embracing, is an effective solution. However, one must bear in mind that neither Rolland nor Vivekananda has the least intention of implying that every race on earth should give up its religion and practice Vedanta. Far from it! Rolland, expecting such a misinterpretation, reminds us that uniformity means death to his hero who "jubile de l'immense diversité des religions et des pensées."[114] And Rolland himself does he not jubilate in view of this highly tolerant attitude and liberal-mindedness? He certainly does for he believes that the time is ready to receive the lofty ideas of Vivekananda: "Ces idées d'universalisme et de fraternité spirituels sont dans l'air d'aujourd'hui."[115] What he deplores, however, is the fact that clever governments and individuals are turning those ideas to their own benefit. This, evidently, is a serious mistake and therefore a great obstacle in the way of man's progress. In that respect, Rolland, the die-hard seeker of Truth, recommends the following deep thought of Vivekananda to meditate on: "L'homme ne progresse jamais d'erreur en vérité, mais de vérité en vérité, d'une moindre à une plus haute."[196] According to him, it is the acceptance and not the toleration of Truth that counts and that it is on the equal sharing of this Truth that Universal Brotherhood depends. This brings us to another very significant aspect of Vivekananda's religious views, namely, the question of love for our neighbour. Once again, Rolland does justice to his hero when he remarks that the feeling of voluntary debasement and humility that Westerners attach to the verb 'to serve' is totally absent from the Vedantism of Vivekananda. According to Vedanta, he explains, to serve and to love means to be equal to the one served or loved. Thus, a Vedantist loves his neighbour as himself mainly because he firmly believes that God is in every one of us. We should, therefore, be hardly surprised when Vivekananda proudly proclaims: "Il est un athée, celui qui ne croit pas en lui"[197] or "Cette foi en toi signifie la foi en tous. Car tu es tous. L'amour de toi veut dire de tous. Car tous et toi, vous êtes Un".[198] This belief in the omnipresence of God is the very nucleus of Vedantic teachings. In other words, one does not become a Vedantist if one does not accept at the very outset, the fact that God is everything that exists in this universe. This Vedantic teaching, we believe, enhances to a remarkable degree, the universal aspect of Vivekananda's religious views.

Rolland sees in the man whose Vedantism he has interpreted, a great builder whose constructive genius may be summed up in two words: "Equilibre et synthèse"[199] for he is convinced that Vivekananda has not only practiced to the letter the four yogas he has described for us but has also gone further on the practical level. What he means here is that his hero "tient les rênes des quatre voies de la vérité: l'amour, l'intelligence, le travail, l'énergie. Par toutes les quatre, il s'achemine, du même coup, vers l'Unité"[200] and in this great achievement worthy but of a superman, he sees "...la totale harmonie de l'Energie humaine."[201] Being himself "l'unité vivante",[202] Vivekananda worked doggedly for the unity of both thought and action and Rolland pays a just homage to his hero when he writes:

> Son plus grand mérite ne fut pas de *prouver* par des raisons cette unité hindoue, mais de *l'imprimer* dans le coeur, à coups d'éclairs. Il avait le génie des mots lumières, de ces paroles foudroyantes qui jaillissent de la forge de l'âme et transpercent les millions d'hommes.[203]

These words are far from being pure flattery for the testimonies of those who attended the Parliament of Religions of 1893 in Chicago and of those who attended the Swami's lectures in Europe, are here to prove that the French biographer has not in the least exaggerated in the above statement.

What is evidently quite fascinating to Rolland in Vivekananda's Vedantism is its practical aspect from which India has benefited to a great extent for the Swami's famous words: "...Le seul Dieu qui existe, le seul Dieu auquel je croie..., mon Dieu les misérables, mon Dieu les pauvres de toutes les races!..."[204] are not at all words hammered out to impress. It is rather an expression of his deep concern for humanity at large. Hence his plan for the establishment of the Ramakrishna Order whose aim was to help people to "atteindre à leur libération propre, ainsi que de s'armer pour le progrès du monde et l'amélioration de toutes ses conditions - le tout selon le modèle et les voies de Ramakrishna."[205] To Rolland that first Math (monastery) is, "Civitas Dei - La Cité de l'Homme."[206] This monumental service done by Vivekananda whose fruit is still being relished by not only Vedantists and yogis but also by liberal-minded spiritual men all over the world, the French biographer considers to be the reawakening of mysticism for the well-being of action: "...et toute la nappe d'eau du mysticisme, qui dormait au-dessous, se frayant issue, à gros bouillons se déversait dans l'action. L'Occident doit prévoir les energies qu'y puisera cette action."[207] But for everything to work well and bear its fruits, he points out, we have to accept two Vedantic ideas which are not at all foreign to the West, namely: "La Divinité de l'homme"[208] and "La spiritualité essentielle de la Vie."[209] Since these ideas are not alien to the West, he is hopeful regarding their gaining currency in the West. Addressing himself to Westerners, he writes in conclusion:

> Parmi les ruines de l'esprit, dont notre Europe est jonchée, 'Notre Mère l'Inde' vous enseignera à dégager les fondations inébranlables de votre Capitale... Voici les nombres et les plans du Maître-d'oeuvre. Avec nos propres matériaux,

> reconstruisons notre maison![210]

To this, we would add that such was also the wish of Vivekananda, the "Maître-d'oeuvre" who believed that the salvation of Europe depended upon a rationalistic religion like the Advaita Vedanta.

It would have certainly been unfair on Rolland's part to take leave of his Western readers without a word of warning and caution regarding Vedantic mysticism, for both Ramakrishna and Vivekananda never ceased to warn their own disciples of the dangers that misunderstandings and excess of zeal may bring forth. That any novice is prone to misinterpretations is proved by Vivekananda's own boastful talks of his juvenile days which Rolland quotes. The idea of Atman (the Sovereign Soul) itself may act as a strong wine and intoxicate the novice. It is clear then, that Rolland wants to warn us when he explains the prudent attitude of his hero thus:

> Et c'est pourquoi un Vivekananda se garde bien de vouloir entraîner dans sa montée la masse des âmes non aguerries encore à l'escalade et au souffle des abîmes. Il les engage à cheminer, par petites étapes, en s'appuyant sur le bâton de leur religions propres ou des Credo provisoires de l'esprit de leur temps et de leur pays.[211]

In the eyes of both Rolland and his hero the real great danger that the sudden realization of inner power can bring forth is social upheavals whose far-reaching effects cannot be predicted. Hence the reason why both Vivekananda and his Ramakrishna Order obstinately refused to participate in political action of any sort. Rolland may seem sceptical when he maintains that every great doctrine is fatally deformed by exploiters and particularly when he goes as far as to declare that even the Church is to be blamed for stifling doctrines by concealing them within its walls instead of protecting them against deformation. But this fear or feeling of mistrust is justifiable when considered in the light of his contention that a doctrine in its pure state is "...un réservoir de magnifique force morale."[212] Let us mention, in passing, that the success of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission depends entirely on the teachings of its master in their original form and on strict observance of the principles laid down by its founder, Vivekananda. Rolland admired this attitude of the Mission so much that he used every endeavour to found a Ramakrishna Ashram in France in 1938. He was naturally delighted to welcome at his place the first representative of that Ashram, Swami Siddheswarananda, on March 30, 1938. One may well ask why Rolland had "puissamment contribué"[213] to the foundation of the Ashram. To those who have paid due attention to his work on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda the answer is evidently that Rolland had very well captured the practical aspect of his heroes' teachings and that his contribution to the foundation of the first French Ashram was a logical response to Vivekananda's plea for the evangelization of mankind by propagating his Universal Religion, the all-embracing Faith.

Romain Rolland's Comparison of Mysticism, East and West.

Rolland's "Appendice à l'Evangile de Vivekananda"[214] is to be considered seriously for it contains the fruit of his research on mysticism. While deploring the lack of studies on the intuitive function of the religious spirit he suggests a thorough investigation of the subject to modern psychologists with particular attention paid to the question of absolute mystical introversion. He believes that unless this is done, one cannot fully appreciate the practical value of active and creative introversion. That the practical aspect of such an introversion could be highly beneficent to the West, he feels certain of when he refers to reawakened India thus:

> Mais son intériorisation, où s'est refugié le feu de sa vie menacée, va être, sous nos yeux, le principe même de sa résurrection nationale. Et l'on verra, avant peu, quel brasier d'action est cet Atman, qu'elle couve, en elle depuis quelque mille ans. Je souhaite aux peuples 'extravertis' d'Occident de retrouver au fond d'eux les mêmes sources d''introversion' active et créatrice.[215]

He believes that if the West fails to do what he is suggesting here, there will be no future hope for it in spite of its highly developed technical knowledge.

Rolland begins his comparative study of Western and Indian mysticism by suggesting that chairs for the comparative studies of Eastern and Western metaphysics and mysticism be established. Once again he deplores the deficiency in this field for he believes that such a comparative enterprise is "indispensable à l'esprit humain, s'il veut apprendre à se connaître soi-même tout entier".[316] Agreeing with Professor Rudolf Otto, author of Mysticism East and West, he suggests that an objective study in the above-mentioned field should be done to reveal to one and all the universal and perennial aspect of the religious experiences of various races of the world and the kinship of these experiences which proves the unity of the human spirit regardless of race and time. The next step would be the study of the systems that are responsible for the good functioning of the mystical experience. Such an enterprise, he maintains, would be profitable to both East and West, for in spite of the fact that mystical experiences are basically the same - being the development of the same mental power - there are variations imposed upon them by racial, temporal, and cultural diversity. According to him, Indian metaphysicans have nothing to lose by studying Alexandrian and Christian mysticism. It is precisely for their benefit that he throws light on the characteristics that reveal the affinities and differences between Indian and Mediterranean mysticism.

Rolland entertains not the least doubt regarding the existence of a great affinity between the theory of ecstasy of Philo, a Jew of first century Alexandria, and that of the Indians for it follows similar steps: "...retrait en soi, puis par la fuite de soi et par totale négation des sens et de la raison et de l'être même, afin de s'identifier avec l'Un."[317] Similarly he finds an affinity between Plotinus' view of the Absolute and that of the Vedantists. But what is more striking is the kinship between the ecstatic experience of the system of Plotinus and the Vedantic Samadhi. This is evident in his interpretation of Plotinus' description of the experience: "L'âme doit, selon Plotin, se vider de toute forme et de tout contenu, de tout mal et de tout bien, et de toute pensée, pour s'unir à Ce qui n'est ni forme, ni contenu, ni mal, ni bien ni pensée."[218] It is with delight that Rolland, the adept of mysticism, invites every Hindu to know Plotinus better for in him he sees "...le grand frère yoghin qui, à la dernière heure de la Grèce, dans ce majestueux coucher de soleil, maria Platon à l'Inde."[219]

In Denis the Areopagite, the Christian mystic, Rolland finds yet another marriage of East and West. Nowhere is the kinship between the conceptions of Hindu and Christian mysticism more obvious than in this great mystic's concept of Super-eminent Unity which he describes as being "Sans raison, sans entendement, sans nom... Auteur de toutes choses, cependant elle n'est pas, parce qu'elle surpasse tout ce qui est..."[220] Rolland mentions that the Aeropagite's concept has three paths that lead to God and of these one is a negative path. He is certain that any Vedantist would see something of the Jnânayoga in the description of that negative path. Such similarities have enabled Rolland to conclude that "La construction religieuse de l'Aréopagite fait emploi de bien des matériaux qui se retrouvent dans les édifices de pensée de l'Inde."[221]

Furthermore, he maintains that in mysticism East and West have a common source and do meet.

Finally, Rolland invites the Indian mystics to consider Western mysticism seriously for, in his judgement, they have three main lessons to learn from it namely, the architectural sense of Christian metaphysicians so evident in the Areopagite's work; the psychological science of the Master mystics of sixteenth century Spain and of seventeenth century France; the formidable energies that Western mysticism uses to achieve the Divine Union. In other words, he believes that Hindu mysticism would benefit from a study of these three aspects of Western mysticism and that by inviting the Indian mystics to undertake such a study he is simply observing Vivekananda's own principle regarding the enlargement and completion of his (the latter's) conception of Unity.

Such is the nature of Rolland's study of the lives and teachings of India's two famous modern Vedantists, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. By his own admission, it is a study done with a great deal of free judgement and enthusiasm; with sincerity and a clear awareness of his being prone to misinterpretations. That he has successfully achieved his aim is, by general consent, beyond any doubt. As a biographer, he very adroitly reveals the personalities of the two spiritual leaders without, however, allowing himself to be swayed by his admiration for them. As we follow him in his story of these two "géniales personnalités, qui ont, depuis un siècle, surgi de l'Inde renouvelée, réveillé les antiques énergies de leur terre, et fait refleurir sur elle un printemps de pensée,"[222] we can hardly help noticing with amazement how effectively he has been able to penetrate the very spirit of Indian culture and civilization, particularly when we consider the fact that he was a Frenchman who had never been able to set foot on his beloved land of the Ganges and the Vedas or on any other part of Asia. That he has been successful in bringing out the heroic qualities of the two spiritual geniuses is quite evident and this is entirely due to his experience in hero-worshipping. In Ramakrishna he has shown us one of the greatest mystics of modern times who realized within himself total Unity, and a great religious leader who conceived the idea of a universal religion whose God belongs equally to all religions on earth. Though not schooled, he managed to study all religions and philosophies and in exemplary humility taught others the way to salvation according to Vedantic principles. His disciples, Vivekananda in particular, revealed the success of his teaching in a very convincing way.

In Vivekananda, Rolland has shown us not only a great disciple of the man who embodied Hindu mysticism at its best but also a vigorous and brilliant spiritual leader - a man of action with a rare broadmindedness coupled with an equally rare broadheartedness. Hence his emphasis on this hero's conception of a Universal Science - Religion, the only religion in which he sees the salvation of mankind.

The Reactions to Romain Rolland's work on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda: East and West

As an interpreter of Indian thought in the West, Rolland's achievement is not to be underestimated in spite of the few errors he has made. These errors, as we shall see, do not affect his interpretation as a whole. Swami Ashokananda, editor of Prabuddha Bharata, the organ of the Ramakrishna Order, the very man whom Rolland used to consult while writing on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, has protested against the errors in order to dispel consequent misunderstandings. He feels that the French writer has controverted his thesis on the question of Western indebtedness to Indian wisdom raised in his chapter, 'Civitas Dei - the City of Mankind'. According to the Swami, Vedantic ideas reached the West and countries outside India through the efforts of: Western Sanskritists, the Ramakrishna Mission, teachers, literature and through independent growth, outside India, of Vedantic ideas as a result of historical changes. Of the ideas themselves, the Swami points out, the two main ones are: the inner Divinity of man and the spiritual nature of life's ultimate ideal. In other words, he means that the Divine power is inherent in man and that both religion and society should recognize this Divine aspect of man's nature. Man, on his part, should work towards a spiritual rather than materialistic ideal. Unlike

Rolland, the Swami believes that the West does not profess these Vedantic ideas which, he is prepared to admit, are in its subconscious mind. Furthermore, he is not inclined to think that Christianity or the Greco-Roman culture welcomes these ideas.

While dealing with the Areopagite's religious edifice Rolland has expressed the feeling that since every man has Divine potentiality in him, he will naturally be able to realize the Divine Union without any outside help. Here again, the Swami differs. Though the realization is a personal one, he argues, outside help, such as knowledge about the means of realization and the power to realize, is an absolute necessity. Ideas, Vedantic or not, he points out, travel from man to man and this dissemination of knowledge is necessary. Without acquired knowledge it is practically impossible for all men to apprehend the Vedantic ideas though they are of universal nature, he concludes. While he admits that Vedanta is universal, he implies that only its fundamental truths are so.

Another important point upon which the Swami disagrees with Rolland concerns the architectural aspect of Christian metaphysics from which, the latter believes, the Indian metaphysicians have much to learn. True to Vedantic tradition, the Swami does not reject the suggestion that Indian metaphysicians should study Western mystical and metaphysical systems but what he cannot accept is the implication of Rolland's suggestion namely, that the Hindu systems are lacking in forms. Hence the following remarks:

> Evidently M. Rolland has omitted to consider the wonderfully rich system of Vaishnava, Shâkta, Vedantic and Yogic thoughts with their highly developed psychology and metaphysics. If Christianity has its metaphysical architecture, Hinduism also has its own in perfectly developed forms. This need not, of course, prevent Hinduism from learning about the mystical and metaphysical systems of Christianity. Hinduism is always ready to assimilate all that is beautiful and new in any thought-system of the world.[223]

In the Swami's view, the superiority of the architectural sense of Hinduism is to be found in the scientific and rational aspects of the Vedantic systems which are, unlike the Christian sytems, based on scientific philosophy.

On the question of assimilation of Vedantic ideas in the West, the Swami shares Prof. S. Radhakrishnan's negative attitude that Vedanta being essentially rational and scientific is opposed to Christianity. Besides, universality as it is conceived by Vedanta is not acceptable to the Christian dogma. However, he admits that it is not altogether impossible for Vedantic ideas to gain currency in the West and that there has been progress in the dissemination of these ideas.

Rolland's interpretation of the Christian conception of Christ as the 'Son of Man' and its kinship with the Vedantic idea of the Divinity of man is considered as a confusion by the Swami. According to the latter, the Christian concept of man as a born sinner and Christ as the son of God, makes this kinship with the Vedantic concept of Divinity of man impossible.

Yet another error made by Rolland, in the eyes of the Swami, concerns the interest of Westerners in Indian thought. The French writer is wrong, he points out, when he speaks of this interest as being a post-war event. He has the feeling that Rolland has confused the origin of that interest with its post-war growth which evidently was remarkable.

The Swami's consideration of Rolland's knowledge of Indian influence on the European thought of the Ancient and Middle Ages is quite enlightening in view of the additional information it supplies particularly on the similarity of Plotinus' conception of the Good, the One Reality to Vedantic *Brahman* (Godhead); on the kinship of his idea of Universal Mind with *Ishvara* (Personal God); on the similarity of his concept of man as spirit, soul and body to Vedantic *Kârana*, *Sukshma* and *Sthula Upâdhi*; on the similarity of his three spheres of existence to the three states of Vedanta namely, *Jâgrat*, *Svapna* and *Sushupti*; in his Ecstasy the Swami sees the Vedantic *Samâdhi* and in his Necessity the conception of *Karma*. Considering these similarities and Max Muller's opinion - "Plotinus and his school seem to have paid great attention to foreign, particularly to Eastern religions and superstitions, and endeavoured to discover in all of them remnants of divine wisdom"[224] and because of the fact the Ammonius, Plotinus' teacher had known Indians, he is inclined to conclude that Plotinus was inspired by Indian teaching. Besides, historical facts tend to show that Indian wisdom was known to the educated elite of Alexandria of which Plotinus was a prominent figure.

The Swami admits that evidence of Indian influence on Greek philosophers is less obvious. He sees an influence of Vedic wisdom on Heracleitus and to a greater extent on Pythagoras who accepted the Indian theory of reincarnation. He agrees with Max Muller who maintains that "It cannot be denied that the similarity between Plato's language and that of the Upanishads is sometimes very startling"[225] and that educated Brahmins used to visit Athens. As to the influence of Buddhism after Alexander's invasion, the Swami feels certain. Following in the footsteps of great Orientalists, he draws this conclusion:

> But however inadequate the historical information at our disposal, there is not the least doubt that those who were most responsible for introducing Vedantic ideas and practices in the West - Pythagoras, some Greek philosophers, Gnostics, Essenes, Therapeutae, Plotinus and the Neo-Platonist Dionysius - were indebted directly or indirectly to India. As to the Modern Age, little more comment is necessary.[226]

As we have mentioned earlier, the errors made by Rolland did not affect his interpretation of Indian thought on the whole. His unconventional approach to it has definitely enhanced the effectiveness of his popularizing endeavour. Testimonies regarding the great effect produced by his work in both the East and the West abound. In India, where the work has been translated into all languages and dialects, the reception was warm to say the least. Swami

Ashokananda, whose comments on Rolland's errors we have dealt with above, remarks in 1931 in connection with his discussion of the scarcity of the influence of Vedantic ideas in the West: "M. Rolland's great books on Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda have made up for this to a certain extent, for which the Ramakrishna Order is profoundly grateful to him."[227] In 1937, on the occasion of the Ramakrishna's centenary celebration, the Order officially recognized the great service done by the French biographer to India as its spiritual ambassador in the West. Jean Herbert, the well-known Orientalist, who attended the Parliament of Religions which followed that celebration, conveyed the good news to his friend, Rolland, when he paid him a visit three months later. It was no doubt with a feeling of satisfaction that the latter recorded the news in his diary thus: "Herbert me dit que tout l'ordre de Ramakrishna reconnaît que c'est à mes livres qu'est due l'extension universelle de la pensée et de la gloire de Ramakrishna et Vivekananda."[228] Addressing the audience at the celebration of the centenary of Rolland's birth in Delhi in 1966, Dr. Francis Doré, the Cultural Counsellor of the French Embassy, recognizing the homage paid to Rolland by India for his contribution to the dissemination of Indian thought in the West, made the following fitting statement:

> Few countries have welcomed the thinking of Romain Rolland with as much warmth and understanding as India. As an example we need only cite this celebration of the centenary of his birth, not far from the Ganges' shore where, already in 1908 he

> dreamed of coming 'in this life or another' and, as he added, filled with hope which you were able to fulfill: 'there I shall no longer be a stranger.'
>
> Few French writers have contributed as much to European knowledge of Indian thinking as Romain Rolland.[229]

Dr. Lokenath Bhattacharya, another participant at the centenary celebration was equally laudatory when he stated:

> Considering that Rolland never came to India - in fact all his travels were limited only to Europe - his writings on India are full of such penetrating insights which in their depthness and accuracy are indeed baffling. He had a long love affair with this country, which makes his first centenary here particularly significant.[230]

Nothing could be closer to the truth regarding Rolland's Indian experiment. Indeed the way in which he has captured the very spirit of Indian culture and civilization amazes one and all. Gertrude Emerson, reviewing Rolland's work on Hindu mysticism very aptly remarks:

> "If one hopes to grasp what is fundamental in Indian life, one must apprehend the spiritual values that India has stressed through countless centuries."[231]

We need hardly say that the success of Rolland's enterprise is due to the fact that he has done precisely what Emerson is suggesting here. K.R. Srinivasa Aiyengar, an Indian reviewer of both Rolland's work on Indian thought and Swami Ashokananda's pamphlet, has made the following comments:

> The two books of this great French writer possess abundant merits, too numerous to be enumerated. They are the works of a very highly gifted mind, the products of unceasing toil in the pursuit after truth. They are passionate appeals to the people of the West to understand the East. They are two devoted acts of the author's life-long task of reconciling man with man. They are the poetry of an anguished soul thirsting for the betterment of humanity: they are the philosophy of a rich life fertile in thought and is capable of assimilating

> without surrendering, absorbing without losing itself.[232]

We may safely add that very few indeed among those who have dealt with Indian thought have been able to do so the Rollandian way. There is no doubt in our mind that through his solid work on Hindu mysticism he proved to be a spiritual ambassador par excellence of India in the West. We may also add that, by the same token, he was able to satisfy, to a certain extent, his ever growing passion for uniting the East and the West. That he had found the same passion in his two Indian heroes, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, goes without saying.

1 Romain Rolland, Le Voyage Intérieur (Paris: Albin Michel, 1942), p. 119.
Journey Within, trans. Elsie Pell (New York: Philosophical Library, 1947), p. 80.

> "moral severity, steely, relentless toward falsehood, compromises, and the little cowardices that hold back the upward flight of the soul..."

2 Ibid., p. 122 and cit. transl., p. 82.

> And my mother's religious nature, that counted all human glory lost, except in God, always knew how to administer the antidote. Under the reproachful glance of my severe judge, I suffered from my moral weakness, my little fears, my white lies, my low ranking, as from a disease, almost as though they were dishonorable... And yet (explain it, if you can!), that God of the Church - did I even know him? Yes, by proxy. On my mother's word of honour."

3 Ibid., p. 130-131 and cit. transl., p. 89.

> "My first act of strength, during this period of my adolescence when I was sinking without God, was to break with my religion. It was my most religious act. (I shall come back to that.) Out of respect for myself and the hidden God, I did not wish to pretend, to imitate the appearance of faith, to whitewash the outside, to persist in conforming. God! I am honest with you! I don't go to Mass any more. I know it is too solemn for me to incline before your bleeding body, a body deprived of its soul, whose lips pronounce empty prayers. I do not believe in you."

4 Ibid., p. 131 and cit. transl., p. 90.

> "My break with Catholicism hurt my mother deeply."

5 Ibid.

> "the Guiding Spirit of my life"

6 Ibid., p. 133 and cit. transl., p. 91.

> "her little musician, although in rebellion against God, was serving God."

7 Paul Claudel, "La Pensée Religieuse de Romain Rolland", La Revue Des Deux Mondes, 15 janvier 1949, pp. 193-211.

> It was first Spinoza, then Tolstoy, later the Hindus, but always the master, the true master, the guide to whom he never ceased to cling, from the

> beginning to the end of his long career, with an ever intense, curious and passionate devotion, to whom he devoted almost exclusively the last years of his life; it was the great revealer, the great inspired called Ludwig van Beethoven."

8 Romain Rolland, "Extrait de Testament", *Gavroche*, 8 février 1945.

> "Though I do not believe in the ceremonies of the Church, I agree that my body be taken to the Saint-Martin Church of Clamecy and that the service for the dead be celebrated. I believe that by denying it to myself I would create a scandal among honest people who are my friends and that I would add to the pain of hearts who are dear to me. I do not want this."

9 Romain Rolland, *Inde: Journal 1915-1943*, (Bale: Edition Vineta, 1951), p. 108.

> "Never have I better felt the powerful virtue of Christianism and all that Western races owe to it than by listening to Tagore: the permanent example of Christ, acting and suffering, - the perpetual watch of the conscience, as that of the lamp of the Holy Sacrament, the daily examination, - the moral confession, - etc."

10 Romain Rolland, *Le Voyage Intérieur*, (Paris: Albin Michel, 1959), p. 206.

> "We are all on the same side of the wall. On the other side is God. All alone, - may he stay there!"

11 Romain Rolland, *Inde: Journal 1915-1943*, p. 12.

> "closer to Buddha than to the mitred Brahmins of France and Germany."

12 Romain Rolland, *Le Cloître de la Rue d'Ulm*, (Paris: Albin Michel), p. 15.

> "As far as I am concerned, mysticism is harassing me and I feel that I am going to fall into it."

13 Ibid., p. 30.

> "He (Suarès) was all the south of France, exuberant and sensual, and I was all the North, mystical and absorbed..."

14 Ibid., p. 63.

"At the concert, I notice, with a real anxiety, the torpor which invades the whole of my being at certain quite frequent moments. I have already felt it, at school: I have a tendency to hypnotic ecstasy, either through hearing or through sight. My personality is swallowed up."

15 Ibid., p. 156.
"an aristocratic sensualism."

16 Ibid., p. 157.
"forgetfulness of the selfish personality, the absorption into divine Unity, into ecstasy."

17 Ibid., p. 290.
"It is remarkable how I often detach myself from me. Those who are dear to me, I know that they love Romain and that Romain loves them. But that the existence of this Romain and theirs appears far off to me! How pale it is! I let myself be sucked up by the life of the beyond; and from there, I watch them pass, them and me with a somewhat indifferent benevolence. It seems to me that I am in God's bosom; and I hope that I will feel united with us there."

18 Romain Rolland, letter to Dilip Kumar Roy in Roy Dilip Kumar, *Among the Great* (Bombay, Nalanda Publications, 1945), p. 25.

19 Romain Rolland, *Le Cloître de la Rue D'Ulm*, p. 184.
"a kind of *nirvana*, through passion, and still more through reason"

20 Derek P. Scales, "Feeling of Nature in Romain Rolland" *Journal of French Studies*, Vol. IX, No. 1, January - April, 1972, pp. 40-54.

21 Romain Rolland, *Le Voyage Intérieur*, pp. 18-19.
Journey Within, p. 1.
"I am a prisoner! ... I was in 'the Trap.'"

22 W. E. Garrison, "Mystic and Musician", *The Christian Century*, Vol. 64, October 22, 1947, pp. 1271-1272.

23 Romain Rolland, *Le Voyage Intérieur*, p. 31.
Journey Within, p. 10.

"I have always lived two lives simultaneously: that of the person hereditary influences forced upon me to assume, in a certain point in space and in a moment of time; and the other, a formless Being, nameless, homeless, timeless, the very substance and breath of all life."

24 Ibid., p. 32 and cit. transl., p. 11.
"Spiritual outbursts."

25 Ibid.
"the fire that nourishes the heart of the universe."

26 Ibid.
"The mark of its heat is a visible on my body, battered and tossed about like a pebble, as it was in that far-off time when it branded the delicate, shrinking flesh of the youth."

27 Ibid., p. 32 and cit. transl., pp. 10-11.
"I lived apart from her, yet ever near, listening to her traveling by my side under the rock - and suddenly, in the far distance, at moments when I least expected it, she was quickened by the upsurgings of artesian springs that filled me with an overpowering blow."

28 Ibid., p. 37 and cit. transl., p. 15.
"...full, tranquil harmony, with consonant chords, superbly orchestrated, no useless brasses, but wood and string instruments, clear vision, perfection of arrangement and sensuous reason___"

29 Ibid., p. 38 and cit. transl., p. 16.
"...my mind was still closed to abstract ideas."

30 Ibid., p. 37 and cit. transl., p. 15.
"...everything took a meaning; everything was explained."

31 Ibid., p. 40 and cit. transl., p. 17.
"...elixir of life everlasting."

32 Ibid.

"I shall never forget that, in the tumultuous era of my boyhood, I found refuge in the deep retreats of the _Ethics_."

33 Ibid., p. 42 and cit. transl., p. 19.
"...in Spinoza's own text, I discovered, not him, but my own self."

34 Ibid., pp. 44-45 and cit. transl., p. 21.
"My prison-gates are opened. That, then, is the answer, darkly conceived in pain and despair, called forth by cries of passion on broken wings, relentlessly sought after, insistently desired, in bruises and tears of blood - there is at last, the answer to the enigma of the Sphinx that has held me in its grasp since childhood, the answer to the crushing antinomy between the immensity of my inner being and the cell of my person, that humiliates and stifles me! - "_Natura naturans_," and "_natura naturata_" are one and the same. "_Everything that is, exists in God_." And I, too, am in God! In my icy room, where the winter night is falling, I escape from the bottomless pit of _Substance_ into the dazzling light of _Being_."

35 Ibid., p. 43 and cit. transl., p. 20.
"...liberating significance of Spinoza's philosophy,"

36 Ibid., p. 45 and cit. transl., p. 22.
"...breaks the seals of the skies."

37 Ibid., p. 47 and cit. transl., p. 23.
"With my eyes, my hands, my tongue, with all the capillaries of my mind, I have savored it. I have embraced the _Being_."

38 Ibid., p. 51 and cit. transl., p. 26.
"...construct my life - my true creative life - my passions and my works."

39 Jacques Roos, "Romain Rolland et Spinoza", _Revue de Littérature Comparée_, Tome XXXI, No. 1, 1957, p. 56.
"Thus the 'revelation of Spinoza' has steered Romain Rolland towards a path which, not only leads him to self-discovery and to find God, but also, on the way, reveals to him the secret for union with God,

consequently to be God."

40 Romain Rolland, unpublished letter to Kalidas Nag, July 18, 1924. (Available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris).
"had drunk at the religious thought of India."

41 Romain Rolland, Le Voyage Intérieur, p. 56.
Journey Within, p. 30.
"Suddenly it was as though the tunnel opened. Beyond, I saw the fields basking in the sunlight, the waving grasses, the soaring larks, ... And, hidden in the corner of the dark, motionless car, my heart laughed for joy."

42 W. E. Garrison, "Mystic and Musician" The Christian Century, Vol. 64, October 22, 1947, pp. 1271-1272.

43 Romain Rolland, Le Voyage Intérieur, p. 57.
Journey Within, p. 31.
"...the larks that soar up toward the sky and toward peace___."

44 Romain Rolland, L'Ame Enchantée (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1967), pp. 421-422.
The Soul Enchanted
"Summer", trans. Eleanor Stimson and Van Wyck Brooks (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1925), pp. 355-356.
"She had a feeling of relief, as if a knot, a link of the chain, had just been broken... and in a flash she had a vision of the chain of servitudes from which, one by one, the soul slowly frees itself through a series of existences, its own and those of others (they are all the same)... And she asked herself: "Why, why these eternal attachments, these eternal ruptures? Towards what liberation does desire drive us in its sanguinary progress?"
It was only for a moment... Everything about her was just as it had been yesterday: the sky, the earth, the past and the future. But everything that had crushed her yesterday was radiant today."

45 Ibid., p. 425 and cit. transl., p. 360.
"...her next life,"

46 Romain Rolland, Jean-Christophe (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1954), p. 264.
Jean-Christophe, V. I trans. Gilbert

Cannan, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1913), pp. 252-253.

> "The veil was rent. He was blinded. By a flash of lightning, he saw - he was God. God was himself; He burst the ceiling of the room, the walls of the house; He cracked the very bounds of existence. He filled the sky, the universe, space. The world coursed through Him, like a cataract. In the horror of that cataclysm, Christophe fell too, swept along by the whirlwind which brushed away and crushed like staws the laws of nature. He was breathless: he was drunk with the swift hurtling down into God... God - abyss! God - gulf! Fire of Being! Hurricane of life! Madness of living, - aimless, uncontrolled, beyond reason, -for the fury of living!"

47 Ernest Seillière, Mysticisme et Domination: Essais de Critique Impérialiste (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1913), p. 186.

> "And this access of mystical delirium renews itself after, though less intense but always rising unexpectedly from the depths of his turgescent emotiveness and bringing him these pantheistic effusions dear to the great mystics from the time of Jean-Jacques to that of Tolstoy."

48 D. Bresky, "Les aventures mystiques de Jean-Christophe", The French Review, Vol. XLIV, No. 6, May 1971, pp. 1048-1056.

> "The absence of the mystical exaltation does not in the least forbid the author to make Christophe taste the joys of the mystical union. The God who reveals himself to his Beethovian hero is far from possessing the character of the Judeo-Christian Creator. Now he reminds us of one of those 'semi-mystical flashes', now he embodies the Spinozan idea of the divine immanence in creation, in man."

49 Romain Rolland, letter to Father Pailleret quoted by John Cruickshank, "The Religious Ideas of Romain Rolland," The Dublin Review, Vol. 228, No. 464 (1954), pp. 183-195.

50 Romain Rolland, Jean-Christophe, p. 382.
Jean-Christophe, Vol. I trans. Gilbert Cannan (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1913), p. 364.

> "And suddenly there is lightning!
> Christophe shouted for joy.
> Joy, furious joy, the sun that lights up all that is and will be, the godlike joy of creation! There are no living beings but those who create. All the rest

are shadows, hovering over the earth, strangers to life. All the joys of life are the joys of creation: love, genius, action, - quickened by flames issuing from one and the same fire. Even those who cannot find a place by the great fireside: the ambitious, the egoists, the sterile sensualists, - try to gain warmth in the pale reflections of its light.

To create in the region of the body, or in the region of the mind, is to issue from the prison of the body: it is to ride upon the storm of life: it is to be He who Is. To create is to triumph over death."

51 Ibid., p. 383 and cit. transl., p. 364.
"...flash of lightning."

52 Ibid., p. 383 and cit. transl., p. 365.
"This delight in inspiration."

53 Ibid.
"It was only a flash: sometimes others would come in quick succession: each lit up other corners of the night. But usually, the capricious force having once shown itself unexpectedly, would disappear again for several days into its mysterious retreats, leaving behind it a luminous ray."

54 Ibid., p. 771 and cit. transl., Vol. II, p. 136.
"He beat out roads in music, roads that led to the same goal: his soul was a mountain: he tried every pathway up it; on some he would easily, dallying in the shade: on others he mounted toilsomely with the hot sun beating up from the sky, sandy track: they all led to God enthroned on the summit... He thought himself free of Faith, and he was a living torch of Faith."

55 Romain Rolland, *Correspondance Entre Louis Gillet et Romain Rolland* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1949), p. 68.
"No, no, I am not Christian; decidedly I cannot be one. I have but to listen to you defining Christianism: that doctrine which agrees with all."

56 Romain Rolland, *La Vie de Ramakrishna* (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont S.A., 1973), p. 130.
Prophets of The New India trans. E.F. Malcolm-Smith (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1930), pp. 90-91.

"Nothing more noble can be imagined. This is the very highest expression of universal theism; and it comes very close to the free theism of Europe without any forced act of allegiance to revealed religion. It opens its arms to all the purified spirits of the whole earth: past, present and future;"

57 Hubert Juin, "Romain Rolland et l'Inde" *La Gazette des Lettres*, Vol. 20, 15 mai 1952.
"It is because of this that Vivekananda's enterprise fascinates him. He has but one religion: life. It is because of this that Ramakrishna is unforgettable to him. It is not of a religious man, it is the feeling of a profoundly good man who places man above everything else."

58 Romain Rolland, *Inde: Journal 1915-1943*, p. 43.
"While reading with my sister (who is my English interpreter) the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, the beautiful review of Tagore, I am struck with the kinship of my thought with that of the great Hindu mystics. Of course, when I was a child, (or, at least, adolescent) I was closer to them, by nature, than to Christian mystics. Thus, this popular clairvoyant of the XVIth century, the *Pâdû*, the welder-poet, who used to consider *creation* as *continuing perpetually*, and for individual being, expresses itself continuously in the world, *without necessity*, *for their joy*. Both are creators, and mix in a permanent way in their creation. "Offer yourself to you!" You do not have to worry about any other thought. For *this*, it is the same as the master... *O God*, *teach me how to rejoice in thee*, *as thou rejoicest in me*, *in the majestic Durbar of our communion for ever and ever*!
This "*brotherhood in creation*", of God and of man, is one of the secret Credo of my nature."

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid., p. 44.
"How all these great words of India echo in my heart! The ideal of truth, of knowledge, of true science of Brahman (of the substance and of the order of the universe) - has always been mine, all my life long and not the moral ideal, - in spite of appearances."

61 Romain Rolland, unpublished letter to Hans Gotfried,

January 1928. (Available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris).

> "I believe in the Unity of the Being. I believe in the essential Identity of the subject and of the object. If, since ten years, I have become more and more familiar with Indian thought, it is because I have recognized in it - from its great primitive Sacred Books, the Vedas, to its most ingenious poets, thinkers and scholars of today - the most complete and perfect form of my own natural thought and, I am convinced, thousands of thoughts of the West, which ignore each other."

62 Romain Rolland, unpublished letter to Kalidas Nag, February 8, 1923 (Available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris).

> "Soon it will be time for my soul to search its true milieu. For I believe that in this incarnation, I have come to the wrong house."

63 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, pp. 141-142.

> "Visit of Dhan Gopal Mukerji. We were longing to see him, to talk to him about the great Hindu, Ramakrishna, whose historian he is. I was so struck by the reading of a few pages of Mukerji's book done by my sister, that I soon felt the duty of studying and of making known in Europe the extraordinary personality of Ramakrishna and of his impetuous disciple, Vivekananda. Ramakrishna was an uncultivated man without any schooling, but who seems to have possessed one of the most powerful talents of intuition, has realised within himself the perfect fusion of all great religions. I say 'realised'. That which in others was but an ideal of the mind, an attempt at intellectual synthesis, Ramakrishna has achieved, all his life, by immediate instinct. He has lived God, in all His torrential forms. And he has acquired the power to make Him shine on all who were approaching him."

64 Romain Rolland, letter to Swami Ashokananda, June 26, 1927, in Prabuddha Bharata, May, 1966.

65 Romain Rolland, letter to Sofia Bertolini Guerrieri-Gonzaga, November 1, 1928, in Chère Sofia (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1960) p. 321.

> "During the past months, I have had the opportunity to study, with a dear French Catholic friend who is fervent and well-read in her faith, the great Christian mystics of the middle ages and of the past centuries, in order to compare them to Indian

mystics to whom I am devoting a thick book. I have recognized their fundamental identity; the differences are secondary, - (though Churches attribute to them a capital importance); they come from an intellectual will which guide the mystical impetus in a direction given beforehand; but that natural impetus is the same, at its outset, and takes rise from the same source of the soul."

66 Romain Rolland, unpublished letter to Maurice Delamain, December 23, 1929 (Available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris).

"And the greatest misfortune for India is that it has too often been presented to the West by great semitic or semitizing Indologists, ingenious philologists, but hermetically closed to the deep thought of which they are capable of explaining the words - the surface of words - even to Indians."

67 Romain Rolland, letter to Swami Ashokananda, June 26, 1927, in Prabuddha Bharata, May, 1966.

68 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 176.

"It is a year now since a few pages of Dhan Gopal Mukerjee have in fact revealed to me the great soul of Sri Ramakrishna; and that flash of light has urged me to know more about his life and his thought. Since several months, my sister and I are reading the books published by the Prabuddha Bharata Office and by the Ramakrishna Mission, which some Indian friends have had the kindness to send us."

69 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 393.

"Herbert, who has traveled in India, tells how much my popularity is great over there: France is, for the Indians he has met, the country of Romain Rolland. In fact, my books on India have had a deep penetration in Europe, and particularly in France: bookstore accounts do not give any idea of it."

70 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Ramakrishna, p. 16.
Prophets of the New India, p. xvi.

"...the account of a lofty system of thought, at once religious and philosophic, moral and social, with its message for modern humanity from the depths of India's past."

71 Ibid., p. 23 and cit. transl., p. xi.

"I must beg my Indian readers to view with indulgence the mistakes I may have made. In spite of all the enthusiasm I have brought to my task, it is impossible for a man of the West to interpret men of Asia with their thousand years' experience of thought; for such an interpretation must often be erroneous. The only thing to which I can testify is the sincerity which has led me to make a pious attempt to enter into all forms of life."

72 Ibid., p. 19 and cit. transl., p. xix.
"...the whole doctrine of Christ was current before him in the Oriental soul seeded by thinkers of Chaldea, Egypt, Athens and Ionia."

73 Ibid.
"...the younger brother of our Christ."

74 Ibid., p. 20 and cit. transl., p. xx.
"...was the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people."

75 Ibid., p. 20 and cit. transl., p. xix-xx.
"...the fruit of a new autumn, a new message of the Soul, the symphony of India,"

76 Ibid., p. 18 and cit. transl., p. xviii.
"...the key of the lost staircase leading to some of these proscribed souls."

77 Ibid.
"...nothing that I saw there was unknown country."

78 Ibid., 47 and cit. transl., p. 21.
"I will not deny the fact that when I had reached this point in my researches, I shut up the book. Probably I should not have opened it again for a long time, if I had not known by certain indications what heights of wisdom he was to attain in the later years of his life. Now that I have completed the whole ascension, I accept and I understand the risky paths along which it made me pass."

79 Rudolf Otto, Mysticism East and West (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1970), p. 13.

80 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Friend: A Series of Essays* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1899) p. 237.

81 Romain Rolland, *Quinze Ans de Combat* (Paris: Les Editions Rieder, 1935), pp. L1-L11.
I Will Not Rest trans. K.S. Shelvankar (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1937), p. 55.

> "...not the static dream of the infinite in which Indian thought is exhausted, but men who knew how to derive energy from Dream, men who could plunge into the seething surging arenas of action: Gandhi, the shepherd of the peoples, and the hero, Vivekananda."

82 Romain Rolland, *Vie de Ramakrishna*, p. 16.
Prophets of the New India, p. xvi.

> "...with incomparable charm and power... have realised this splendid symphony of the Universal Soul."

83 Ibid., p. 21 and cit. transl., p. xxi.

> "...to bring the sound of the beating of that artery to the ears of fever-stricken Europe, which has murdered sleep. I wish to wet its lips with the blood of Immortality."

84 Ibid., p. 28 and cit. transl., p. 4.

> "...the burning womb of the gods."

85 John Carter, *Review of Prophets of the New India*, *The Bookman: A Review of Books and Life*, Vol. 72, November, 1930, pp. 331-332.

86 Romain Rolland, *La Vie de Ramakrishna*, p. 24.
Prophets of the New India, p. xii.

> "...and I have drawn a little of his sacred water to slake the great thirst of the world."

87 Romain Rolland, unpublished letter to L. van Tricht, March 1, 1930 (Available at Romain Rolland Archives in Paris).

> "...the author - Romain Rolland - has perhaps, revealed more of his metaphysical and religious thought in this work than in any other of his books."

88 Romain Rolland, *La Vie de Ramakrishna*, pp. 23-24.
Prophets of the New India, p. xi.

"I see God in all that exists. I see Him as completely in the least fragment as in the whole Cosmos. There is no difference of essence. And power is universally infinite; that which lies hidden in an atom, if one only knew it, could blow up a whole world."

89 Romain Rolland, 'Royaume Du T' in _Le Seuil_ (Genève: Les Editions du Mont-Blanc S.A., 1945), pp. 50-51.

"It goes without saying that as a youth I did not yet (nor dared to) recognize these Gods. But they were beating within me. Their blood suited the rhythm of my feverish pulse. Nothing in common between these Gods who are in me, I am them - and the God of the Bible, who, beyond the barricaded palisades of Eden (and the angel in his cabin), looks at me as a stranger... Our ancestral polytheism, and the native passion of freedom, make us fraternize, in Gaule, with our Gods. Gods or men, they are ours: the same family, the same flour; it is from it and from our "ahan!" that our bread of life is made."

90 Romain Rolland, _La Vie de Ramakrishna_, p. 42.
Prophets of the New India, p. 16.

"Passion for the dumb Goddess consumed him. To touch Her, to embrace Her, to win one sign of life from Her, one look, one sigh, one smile, became the sole object of his existence. He flung himself down in the wild jungle-like part of the garden, meditating and praying. He tore off all his clothes, even to the sacred cord, which no Brahman ever lays aside; but love for the Mother had revealed to him that no man can contemplate God unless he has shed all his prejudices."

91 Ibid., p. 100 and cit. transl., p. 64.

"Compassion, Devotion and Renunciation."

92 Romain Rolland, Introduction to Ananda Coomaraswamy, _The Dance of Shiva_ (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1948), pp. 5-11.

93 Romain Rolland, _La Vie de Ramakrishna_, p. 90.
Prophets of the New India, p. 56.

"...gained during the course of his life... an encyclopeaedic knowledge of religion and religious philosophy, - a knowledge constantly deepened by meditation."

94 Ibid., p. 85 and cit. transl., p. 52.
"recognized that all religions lead by different paths to the same God."

95 Ibid., p. 65 and cit. transl., p. 36.
"The Universe was extinguished. Space itself was no more. At first the shadows of ideas floated in the obscure depths of the mind. Monotonously a feeble consciousness of the Ego went on ticking. Then that stopped too. Nothing remained but Existence. The soul was lost in Self. Dualism was blotted out. Finite and Infinite space were as one. Beyond word, beyond thought, he attained Brahman."

96 Ibid., p. 64 and cit. transl., p. 35.
"...it belongs not only to the sacred texts of India, but to the Archives of the West, wherein are preserved all the documents relating to the revelations of the science of the Spirit."

97 Ibid., pp. 83-84 and cit. transl., p. 50.
"...have not experienced the shocks of spiritual fires for a long time."

98 Ibid., p. 81 and cit. transl., p. 49.
"All things are God. God is in all things."

99 Ibid., p. 85 and cit. transl., p. 52.
"But he [Ramakrishna] knew that even the differences leading to strife among men are the daughters of the same Mother; that the "Omnipotent Differentiation" is the face of God Himself; that he must love God in all sorts and conditions of men, however antagonistic and hostile, and in all forms of thought controlling their existence and often setting them at variance the one with the other. Above all he must love men in all their Gods."

100 Ibid., p. 96 and cit. transl., p. 61.
"man lost in God."

101 Ibid., p. 96 and cit. transl., p. 60.
"God is in all men, but all men are not in God: that is the reason why they suffer."

102 Ibid., p. 96 and cit. transl., p. 61.

"Not mercy, but service, service for man must be regarded as God!"

103 Ibid., p. 96 and cit. transl., p. 61.
"I have heard a great saying today. I will proclaim the living truth to the world."

104 Ibid., p. 99 and cit. transl., p. 62.
"This divine communion with living, loving, suffering humanity was to be expressed in a passionate, but pre and pious symbol."

105 Ibid., p. 101 and cit. transl., p. 64.
"And he will share the food of immortality in a Lord's Supper, not with twelve apostles, but with all starving souls - with the universe."

106 Ibid., p. 83 and cit. transl., p. 49.
"...inadequacy of their knowledge and of the great starving void... in the soul of India."

107 Ibid., pp. 173-174 and cit. transl., p. 131.
"...and have known how to profit from their intercourse with him. His influence widened their understanding and their heart and did more than anybody else's to bring them into line in people's estimation with the best thought of India, which is the first influx of the scientific knowledge of the West, badly assimilated, had threatened to alienate."

108 Ibid., p. 170 and cit. transl., p. 127.
"He freed their intellectual limbs, petrified within the groove of reason, and made them supple. He tore them from their abstract discussions. "Live, love and create" and their blood flowed through their veins."

109 Ibid., p. 174 and cit. transl., p. 131.
"The true thought of the West has lost nothing through this Hindu awakening. The thought of the East is now independent, and henceforth union can be effected between equal and free personalities..."

110 Ibid.

"the one being subjugated by the other, and one of the two civilisations being assassinated by the other."

111 Ibid., p. 177 and cit. transl., p. 134.
"...the love and service of mankind. His spiritual struggles, his ecstasies, his realization were not to be only for his own profit... [but] for human development, for a new era of spiritual realization."

112 Ibid., p. 198 and cit. transl., p. 151.
"He put himself on a level with his young disciples. He was their companion, their brother; he talked familiarly with them and without any trace of superiority."

113 Ibid., p. 198 and cit. transl., p. 152.
"...the condition of Inward abundance, of vital and digested riches called 'Spirituality'... 'as a flower might be given'."

114 Ibid., p. 199 and cit. transl., p. 152.
"Personal experience. Experiment first and then believe in God."

115 Ibid., p. 218 and cit. transl., p. 169.
"...to remain in this world at the stage before the final, wherein identification with all reality takes place, properly speaking it is the stage of illumination, to which we can all aspire and to which we have the power to attain by ourselves and to guide others to a similar attainment."

116 Ibid., p. 177 and cit. transl., p. 134.
"the word of salvation"

117 Ibid., p. 180 and cit. transl., p. 136.
"...his mission was to seek those who were a stage behind him and with them, in fulfilment of the Mother's will, to found a new order of men, who would transmit his message and teach to the world his word of truth containing all the others. This word was "Universal" - the Union and Unity of all the aspects of God, of all the transports of love and knowledge, of all forms of humanity. Until then nobody had sought to realise more than one aspect of

the Being. All must be realised. That was the duty of the present day. And the man who fulfilled it by identifying himself with each and all of his living brethren, taking unto himself their eyes, their senses, their brain and heart, was the pilot and the guide for the needs of the new age."

118 Ibid.
"...the pilot and the guide for the needs of the new age."

119 Ibid., p. 218 and cit. transl., p. 169.
"...the free spirits of the West."

120 Ibid.
"...realized the unity of living beings through reason or love,..."

121 Ibid., p. 208 and cit. transl., p. 160.
"...in constant contact with the Absolute..."

122 Làszló Dobossy, "Atteindre à l'harmonie," Acta Litteraria, Fasc. 1-2, 1968, p. 191.
"harmonization of the two fundamental activities of man: thought and action."

123 Romain Rolland, Le Voyage Intérieur, p. 234.
"the synthesis of contrary elements."

124 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Ramakrishna, p. 253.
Prophets of the New India, p. 200.
"No word with him was only word; it was an act, a reality."

125 Ibid.
"There was no soul-searching or sadness. Just a word, a smile, the touch of his hand, communicated a nameless peace, a happiness for which men yearned."

126 Ibid., p. 254 and cit. transl., p. 200.
"The force of his joyous flowing stream communicated itself to all souls. He was the power, he was the slope, he was the current; and the other streams and brooks ran towards his river. He was the Ganges itself."

127 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Vivekananda et l'Evangile Universel. (Paris: Les Editions Stock, 1966), p. 346.
Prophets of the New India, p. 547.
"...without attachment and simply for the good of the world!"

128 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 397.
"But if I agree to give him credit, I find it hard to forgive him for his aristocratism. It is an Ashram for the rich. In our era of painful fights for diminishing misery and oppression, it is terribly selfish to shut himself up in his upholstered Ashram, to search for the fullness of his unhampered development. These are games of the privileged. - In spite of my being solicited to write a sequel to my books on the great thinkers of India, I will stick to the Poverello of Bengal, Ramakrishna."

129 Jean Herbert "L'Enseignement de Ramaknishna," in Romain Rolland, La Vie de Ramakrishna, p. 314.
"when they attain Truth, relish in silence their joy without mentioning it to anybody."

130 Ibid.
"having attained this same Truth, cannot keep their happiness for themselves and shout at the top of their voice: 'Come, all of you, come and enjoy Truth with me.'"

131 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Vivekananda, p. 13.
Prophets of the New India, p. 231.
"disseminate the grain of his thought throughout the world,"

132 Ibid.
"physically and morally his direct antithesis."

133 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Ramakrishna, p. 220.
Prophets of the New India, p. 171.
"bright light"

134 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Vivekananda, p. 28.
Prophets of the New India, p. 246.
"the new Oedipus"

135 Ibid., p. 28 and cit. transl., pp. 246-247.
"He was not only the humble little brother, who slept in stables or on the pallets of beggars, but he was on a footing of equality with every man, today an insulted beggar sheltered by pariahs, tomorrow the guest of princes, conversing on equal terms with Prime Ministers and Maharajahs, the brother of the oppressed bending over their misery, then probing the luxury of the great, awakening care for the public weal in their torpid hearts. He was as conversant with the knowledge of the pandits as with the problems of industrial and rural economy whereby the life of the people is controlled, ever teaching, ever learning, gradually making himself the Conscience of India, its Unity and its Destiny. All of them were incarnate in him, and the world saw them in Vivekananda."

136 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Ramakrishna, p. 244.
Prophets of the New India, p. 192.
"He is like the great tree trunks, bearing men and beasts upon the bosom of the Ganges."

137 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Vivekananda, p. 29.
Prophets of the New India, p. 247.
"From North to South the ancient land of India was full of gods; yet the unbroken chain of their countless arms formed only one God."

138 Ibid.
"He realized it also in communion with the living of all castes and those outside caste. And he taught them to realize it. He took mutual understanding from the one to the other, - to strong spirits, to the intellectuals obsessed with the abstract, he preached respect for images, and idol Gods, - to young men the duty of studying the grand old books of the past, the Vedas, the Puranas, the ancient annals, and still more the people of today - to all a religious love for Mother India and a passion to dedicate themselves to her redemption."

139 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Ramakrishna, p. 29.
Prophets of the New India, p. 4.
"formless God, the Unnameable, the Boundless One..."

140 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Vivekananda, p. 40.
Prophets of the New India, p. 257.

"Everything was new to him and both surprised and stupefied him. He had never imagined the power, the riches, the inventive genius of this Western world. Being of stronger vitality and more sensitive to the appeal of force than Tagore or a Gandhi who were oppressed by the frenzy of movement and noise, by the whole European-American (especially American) mechanism, Vivekananda was at his ease in it, at least at first; he succumbed to its exciting intoxication, and his first feeling was of juvenile acceptance; his admiration knew no bounds."

141 Ibid., p. 91 and cit. transl., p. 312.
"...there was no other being so close as he to the Christ."

142 Ibid.
"And nobody felt more clearly that the great Mediator between God and man was called to be the Mediator also between the East and the West, since the East recognizes him as his own."

143 Romain Rolland, _La Vie de Ramakrishna_, p. 21.
Prophets of the New India, p. xxi.
"blood of Immortality"

144 Ibid.
"fever-stricken Europe"

145 Romain Rolland, _Le Vie de Vivekananda_, p. 42.
Prophets of the New India, p. 260.
"Each of the other orators had spoken of his God, of the God of his sect. He - he alone - spoke of all their Gods, and embraced them all in the Universal Being. It was the breath of Ramakrishna, breaking down the barriers through the mouth of his great disciple. [For a moment the Pyrenees had vanished.] The Parliament of Religions gave the young orator an ovation."

146 Swami Vivekananda, Address at the Final Session of the Parliament of Religions (Chicago, September 27, 1893), _Prophets of the New India_, p. 261.

147 Quoted by Romain Rolland in _Prophets of the New India_, p. 262.

148 Romain Rolland, _Le Vie de Vivekananda_, p. 100.

Prophets of the New India, pp. 316-317.
"...feel more deeply the personality of India. And in contrast this made him value the strong and multiple personality of the West. Both seemed to him equally necessary, for they were complementary, awaiting the word to unite them, the common Gospel, and it was he who was to open the path to union."

149 Ibid., p. 104 and cit. trans., pp. 320-321.

150 Ibid., p. 128 and cit. transl., pp. 349-350.
"I cannot touch these sayings of his, scattered as they are through the pages of books at thirty years distance, without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero."

151 Ibid., p. 125 and cit. transl., pp. 346.
"Once more we see in this paroxysm the will to heroism, which to Vivekananda was the soul of action. Ultimate Truth desiring to be seen in all its terrible nakedness and refusing to be softened - Faith which expects nothing in return for its free bestowing..."

152 Romain Rolland, Le Vie de Ramakrishna, p. 23.
Prophets of the New India, p. xi.
"In accordance with the Vedantists I do not need to enclose God within the bounds of a privileged man in order to admit that the Divine dwells within the soul and that the soul dwells in everything - that Atman is Braham: although it knows it not; that view is a form of nationalism of spirit and I cannot accept it. I see God in all that exists. I see Him as completely in the least fragment as in the whole Cosmos."

153 Ibid., p. 161 and cit. transl., p. 371.
"achieved the highest equilibrium between the diverse forces of thought..."

154 Ibid.
"...to sign a treaty of peace between the two forces eternally warring within us, the forces of reason and faith."

155 Romain Rolland, Prophets of the New India, p. 378.

156 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Vivekananda, p. 163.
Prophets of the New India, p. 374.
"The true Vedantic spirit does not start out with a system of preconceived ideas. It has always possessed absolute liberty and unrivalled courage among religions with regard to the facts to be observed and the diverse hypotheses it has laid down for their co-ordination."

157 Ibid., p. 161 and cit. transl., p. 371.
"If there is a sentiment that is absolutely essential to me it is that of Freedom. Without it nothing has any value."

158 Ibid.
"...how closely allied is the aspect of Vivekananda's thought of our own, with our special needs, torments, aspirations, and doubts, urging us ever forward, like a blind mole, by instinct upon the road leading to the light."

159 Ibid., p. 160 and cit. transl., p. 371.
"Vedantic thought, as it has been explained in these modern days through the mouth of Vivekananda."

160 Ibid., p. 303 and cit. transl., p. 507.
"The Universal Gospel of Vivekananda."

161 Ibid., p. 159 and cit. transl., p. 370.
"task of discussing... Hinduism"

162 Ibid., p. 163 and cit. transl., p. 373.
"We are wrong to think of it as total illusion, pure hallucination, vain smoke without fire: for it is this idea that makes us keep the derogatory opinion that the East is incapable of facing the reality of life, and sees in it nothing but the stuff that dreams are made of, a conception that leads it to float through life, half asleep motionless and supine, eyes fixed on the blue depths, like webs of wandering spiders floating in the autumn breeze."

163 Ibid., p. 163 and cit. transl., p. 374.
"faithful to the real thought of modern Vedantism, as it was incarnate in Vivekananda."

164 Ibid., p. 165 and cit. transl., p. 376.
"But for great hearts, the only existence worthy of the name is that of the Absolute. They are impelled to lay hold of it to escape from the Wheel."

165 Ibid., p. 166 and cit. transl., p. 377.
"Better to die on the battlefield that to live a life of defeat!"

166 Ibid., p. 167 and cit. transl., p. 378.
"And so all are marching towards freedom. We are all journeying towards freedom."

167 Ibid.
"-all beings without any exception hear the voice that calls them to freedom."

168 Ibid., p. 167 and cit. transl., p. 379.
"Rather distracted mankind must learn that there are a thousand paths more or less certain, more or less straight, but all going there - and must be helped to free themselves from the quagmire wherein they are walking or from the thickets whereon they are being torn, and shown among all these multitudinous ways the most direct, the _Viae Romanae_, the royal roads: the great Yogas: Work (Karma-yoga), Love (Bhakti-yoga), Knowledge (Jnana-yoga)."

169 S. Radhakrishnan, _Eastern Religions and Western Thought_ (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 36.

170 Romain Rolland, _La Vie de Vivekananda_, p. 170.
Prophets of the New India, p. 381.
"a spiritual discipline"

171 Ibid., p. 172 and cit. transl., p. 385.
"four gospels of Vivekananda"

172 Ibid.
"the most deep... tone"

173 Ibid.
"the Gospel of Work"

174 Ibid., p. 173 and cit. transl., p. 386.

"We learn from Karma-yoga the secret of work, the organizing power of work... Work is Inevitable... but we should work to the highest purpose..."

175 Ibid., p. 174 and cit. transl., p. 386-387.
"Work incessantly, but give up all attachment to work! Hold your mind free! Do not project into it the tentacle of selfishness... 'I and Mine.'"

176 Ibid., pp. 175-176 and cit. transl., p. 389.
"Because his religion was essentially realistic and practical with action as its object,..."

177 Ibid., p. 176 and cit. transl., pp. 391-392.
"to work freely, to work for freedom, to work as master and not as slave."

178 Ibid., p. 177 and cit. transl., p. 391.
"...to raise the masses, so long shamefully betrayed, exploited, and degraded by the very men who should have been their guides and sustainers."

179 Ibid.
"And no other religious doctrine has ever shown so much sympathetic understanding of the spiritual needs of all men from the humblest to the highest."

180 Ibid., pp. 179-180 and cit. transl., pp. 394-395.
"Toiling along, and bending over himself, striving to hear the inner voice, he has heard the voices of those nameless ones rising, like the sound of the sea whence clouds and rivers are born - the dumb thousands whose unexpressed knowledge is the substance of my thoughts and the mainspring of my will. When outside noises cease, I can hear the beating of their pulse in the night."

181 Ibid., p. 185 and cit. transl., p. 402.
"Strength, virile reason, constant preoccupation with universal good, and complete disinterestedness, are the conditions for reaching the goal. And there is still another: it is the will to arrive."

182 Ibid., p. 185 and cit. transl., pp. 401-402.

"'In the first place, inspiration must not contradict reason. The old man does not contradict the child, he is the development of the child. What we call inspiration is the development of reason. The way to intuition is through reason... No genuine inspiration ever contradicts reason. Where it does it is no inspiration.'

'Secondly, inspiration must be for the good of one and all; and not for name or fame or personal gain. It should always be for the good of the world, and perfectly unselfish.'"

183 Ibid., p. 188 and cit. transl., p. 405.
"Vivekananda... one particularly his own"

184 Ibid., p. 188 and cit. transl., p. 408.
"[whose] field of action is the control and absolute mastery of the mind - the first condition of all knowledge, and it achieves its end by concentration."

185 Ibid.
"If by yoga we mean union with the supreme object (and subject) of Knowledge, Raja-yoga is the experimental psycho-physiological method for its direct attainment."

186 Ibid., p. 196 and cit. transl., p. 419.
"high method of the mind."

187 Ibid., p. 198 and cit. transl., p. 422.
"Religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world, just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truths of the physical world."

188 Ibid., p. 199 and cit. transl., p. 423.
"the surest method of penetrating to the bottom of the elemental facts..."

189 Ibid., p. 199 and cit. transl., p. 424.
"primarily a searching critic of the condition of knowledge: time, space, causality, etc., and it reconnoitres the frontiers of the mind in detail before it crosses them."

190 Ibid., p. 207 and cit. transl., p. 436.
"contrary to the most recent findings of the modern Western science."

191 Ibid., p. 228 and cit. transl., p. 438.
"two brothers, who are now at law with each other over a field, the perfect exploitation of which needs their united efforts..."

192 Ibid.
"Human history made that discovery long ago;"

193 Ibid., p. 228-229 and cit. transl., p. 439.
"The Advaita has twice saved India from materialism. By the coming of the Buddha, who appeared in a time of most hideous and widespread materialism... By the coming of Sankara, who, when materialism had reconquered India in the form of the demoralization of the governing classes and of superstitution in the lower orders, put fresh life into Vedanta, by making a rational philosophy emerge from it. We want today that bright sun of intellectuality, joined with the heart of Buddha, the wonderful, the infinite heart of love and mercy. The union will give us the highest philosophy. Science and religion will meet and shake hands."

194 Ibid., p. 231 and cit. transl., p. 442.
"rejoiced in the immense diversity of religions and ideas."

195 Ibid., p. 233 and cit. transl., p. 445.
These ideas of universalism and spiritual brotherhood are in the air today."

196 Ibid., p. 233 and cit. transl., p. 443.
"Man never progresses from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from a lesser to a higher."

197 Ibid., p. 239 and cit. transl., p. 453.
"He who does not believe in himself is an atheist."

198 Ibid., p. 239 and cit. transl., p. 454.
"But it is not a selfish faith... It means faith in all, because you are all. Love for yourselves means Love for all, for you are all one."

199 Ibid., p. 247 and cit. transl., p. 457.
"equilibrium and synthesis"

200 Ibid.
"...held the reins of all four ways of truth: [love, wisdom, work, energy] and travelled along them all simultaneously towards Unity."

201 Ibid.
"the personification of the harmony of all human Energy."

202 Ibid., p. 249 and cit. transl., p. 460.
"his ideal was unity, both of thought and of action."

203 Ibid.
"His claim to greatness lies in the fact that he not only proved its unity by reason, but stamped it upon the heart of India in flashes of illumination. He had a genius for arresting words, and burning phrases hammered out white-hot in the forge of his soul so that they transpierced thousands."

204 Ibid.
"The only God that exists, the only God in whom I believe... my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races."

205 Ibid., p. 248 and cit. transl., p. 459.
"attaining their own liberation, so that they might prepare themselves for the progress of the world and the betterment of its conditions [all according to the model and paths of Ramakrishna.]"

206 Ibid.
"*Civitas Dei* - the City of Mankind."

207 Ibid., p. 250 and cit. transl., p. 461.
"...the whole reservoir of mysticism, sleeping beneath, broke its bounds, and spread by a series of great ripples into action. The West ought to be aware of the tremendous energies liberated by these means."

208 Ibid., p. 252 and cit. transl., p. 461.
"The Divinity of man"

209 Ibid.
"The essential spirituality of life"

210 Ibid., p. 255 and cit. transl., p. 468.
"Among the spiritual ruins strewn all over Europe our 'Mother India' will teach you to excavate the unshakable foundations of your Capitole. She possesses the calculations and the plans of the 'Master Craftsman'. Let us rebuild our house with our own materials."

211 Ibid., p. 260 and cit. transl., p. 471.
"It was this that made Vivekananda careful in this ascent not to hurry the whole mass of souls not yet inured to the precipices and the wind of the chasms. He made each one climb by small stages leaning upon the staff of his own religion or of the provisional spiritual *Credos* of his age and country."

212 Ibid., p. 261 and cit. transl., p. 472.
"a magnificent reservoir of moral force."

213 Romain Rolland, *Inde*: *Journal* *1915-1943*, p. 346.
"powerfully contributed"

214 Ibid., p. 303 and cit. transl., p. 507.
"Appendices to the Universal Gospel of Vivekananda."

215 Ibid., pp. 310-311 and cit. transl., pp. 518-519.
"But we shall see with our own eyes that her interiorization, where the fires of her threatened life has taken refuge, is the principle of her national resurrection. And it will shortly appear how potent a brazier of action is this Atman, over which she has brooded for several thousand years. I advise the 'extrovert' peoples of the West to rediscover in the depths of themselves the same sources of active and creative 'introversion'."

216 Ibid., p. 315 and cit. transl., p. 520.
"is essential if the human spirit is to learn to know itself in its entirety."

217 Ibid., p. 318 and cit. transl., p. 524.
"withdrawal into oneself, then by the flight of the ego and the total negation of the senses, reason and being itself, so that they might be identified with the One."

218 Ibid., p. 321 and cit. transl., p. 527.
"According to Plotinus, the soul ought to empty itself of all form and content, of all evil and good, of all thought of union with That which is neither form, nor content, nor evil, nor good, not thought."

219 Ibid., p. 321 and cit. transl., p. 529.
"this great fellow-yogin, who, in the last hour of Greece, in her majestic sunset, wedded Plato and India."

220 Ibid., p. 324 and cit. transl., p. 533.
"Without reason, without understanding, without name... Author of all things, nevertheless It is not because It surpasses all that is..."

221 Ibid., p. 329 and cit. transl., p. 540.
"The Areopagite uses many materials in his religious edifice that are to be found in the constructions of Indian thought."

222 Romain Rolland, _La Vie de Ramakrishna_, p. 24.
Prophets of the New India, p. xii.
"personalities of genius, who during the last century have sprung up in reawakened India, reviving the ancient energies of their country and bringing about a springtime of thought within her borders."

223 Swami Ashokananda, _The Influence of Indian Thought on the Thought of the West_ (Mayavati: Advaita Ashram, 1931), p.12

224 F. Max Muller, _Theosophy or Psychological Religion: The Gifford Lectures_ (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903), p. 428.

225 Ibid., p. 209.

226 Swami Ashokananda, Op. cit. p. 45.

227 Ibid., p. 23.

228 Romain Rolland, *Inde: Journal 1915-1943*, p. 397. "Herbert tells me that the entire Ramakrishna Order recognizes that the universal extension of of the thought and glory of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda is due to my books."

229 Francis Doré, "Romain Rolland: The Man and his Work" in *100th Anniversary of the Birth of Romain Rolland: A Souvenir* (Delhi: Dept. of Modern European Languages, Univ. of Delhi, 1966), p. 22.

230 Lokenath Bhattacharya, "Romain Rolland: The Evolution of a Patriot" in *100th Anniversary of the Birth of Romain Rolland: A Souvenir*, p. 54.

231 Gertrude Emerson, Review of Romain Rolland's *Prophets of the New India The Nation*, Vol. 131, No. 3413, December 3, 1930, pp. 618-619.

232 K.R. Srinivasa Aiyengar, Review of Romain Rolland's *The Life of Ramakrishna* and *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*, *Federated India*, March 30, 1932, pp. 5 and 9.

> "J'étais, je suis resté profondément Européen. Je n'ai rien abdiqué de ma propre nature. Mais je me suis aperçu qu'elle s'accomplissait toute entière en rejoignant les voies de ces libres esprits de l'Inde."

[Romain Rolland, unpublished letter to his editor, Maurice Delamain, November 26, 1929, available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris.]

CHAPTER IV

THE IMPACT OF INDIAN THOUGHT ON ROMAIN ROLLAND AND VEDANTIC ELEMENTS IN HIS *L'AME ENCHANTEE*

That Romain Rolland was deeply influenced by Indian thought is only too evident. It would be quite erroneous to think that his great interest in that thought was limited to his works on Gandhi, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. To many friends he had confessed that were he younger at the time of his discovery of Indian wisdom, he would have devoted the rest of his literary career to oriental studies like his friend, Jean Herbert. By way of showing how deep the influence of Indian thought was on him we find nothing better than the following words of his addressed to the West:

> Et c'est ici que nous trouvons la main tendue de nos alliés, les penseurs de l'Inde: car ils ont su, depuis des siècles, se cantonner dans cette *Feste Burg* et la défendre, tandis que nous, leurs frères des Grandes Invasions, nous nous épuisons à conquérir le reste de la terre. Reprenons souffle! Léchons nos plaies! Retournons à notre nid d'aigles Himalayens! Il nous attend. Il est à nous. Aiglons d'Europe, nous n'avons rien à abdiquer de notre vraie nature. Notre vraie nature, elle est dans ce nid, d'où nous avons jadis pris notre essor; elle est en ceux qui ont su garder les clefs de notre donjon du Moi Souverain. Il ne s'agit point de nous y enfermer. Il s'agit d'y retremper nos membres las, dans le grand lac intérieur. Après, vos fièvres détendues, des forces neuves gonflant vos muscles, vous reprendrez, mes compagnons, s'il vous plaît, vos Invasions! Qu'un nouveau cycle recommence, si c'est la Loi! Mais, à cette heure, il faut, comme Antée, toucher la Terre, avant de reprendre le combat! Etreignez-la! Que votre pensée revienne à *la Mère*! Buvez son lait! Ses mamelles ont de quoi nourrir encore toutes les races de la terre.

> Parmi les ruines de l'esprit, dont notre Europe est jonchée, 'Notre Mère Inde' vous enseignera à dégager les fondations inébranlables de votre Capitole... Voici les nombres et les plans du Maître-d'oeuvre. Avec nos propres matériaux, reconstruisons notre maison!'

The same feeling of conviction manifests itself when he writes about Vivekananda's idea of a rationalistic religion thus:

> Or, cette religion existe, et c'est l'Advaita de l'Inde, le Non-Dualisme, l'Unité, L'idée de l'Absolu, du Dieu impersonnel : 'la seule religion qui puisse avoir prise sur les grands intellectuels'.[2]

Such words can hardly come from a man who is not convinced of the validity of the redeeming power of Indian thought. On the meeting of East and West rested his high hopes for a united world and in Indian thought he found a reliable bridge between East and West.

It would be a mistake to believe that it was the work on Gandhi which led Rolland to the study of Indian thought. As we have pointed out earlier, his interest in that thought dates back to his adolescent years. We have also focussed attention on the fact that no sooner had he come into contact with that thought later in life than he established its kinship with his own thought. Hence the enthusiasm with which he welcomed the opportunity to study Hindu mysticism. The enterprise was definitely not aimed at working for the victory of the East over the West but at reawakening the latter:

> Je n'ai pas travaillé pour la victoire de l'Orient sur l'Occident, mais pour le réveil du vrai Occident. Ramakrishna et Vivekananda ne font que nous rappeler à la conscience de notre être.[3]

On the personal level what is quite evident is his passionate interest in Indian thought - an interest which grew stronger and stronger. In 1927, for instance, he revealed his deep feeling about Indian metaphysics in no equivocal terms when he wrote to Swami Ashokananda thus:

> For God is in the silence, just as much as in the most forceful expression. In fact of the Eternal there can be no question of priority; there is no commencement and there is no end. But I do not hesitate to recognize in India the most powerful, perfect and complete monument of the Divine Thought, - the Cathedral of Unity and of Identity - the Himalaya of Being.[4]

This recognition was never to lose its grip over his mind as we can see from his numerous references to Indian thought in his _L'Ame_ _Enchantée_, a novel written during his Indian experiment years. To this work we will turn later.

In Rolland's high praise of Gandhism we can trace the influence of Indian thought on him and that influence is nowhere more evident than in his deep interest in Gandhi's _Satyagraha_ (Just attempt) which the Mahatma defined as the triumph of truth by the power of the soul and of love and in his _Ahimsa_ (Non-Violence), both linking Gandhism to Vedantic principles. In other words, it was Gandhi's religious heroism based on strong moral principles that fascinated him. There was no doubt in his mind as to the fact that Gandhi had undergone the influence of Ramakrishna: approving the Mahatma's stand against religious conversion and plea for freedom of worship, he comments:

> On ne peut rien lire de plus contraire à nos habitudes d'esprit, religieuses ou laïques, d'Occident, dont notre monde d'aujourd'hui, puisse tirer un plus utile enseignement. A cette heure de l'évolution humaine, où toutes les forces à la fois, aveugles et réfléchies intérêts et idées, contraignent toutes les nations à s'étreindre étroitement, pour 'la coopération, ou la mort' - il est indispensable que la conscience humain s'imprègne, ainsi que d'un axiome, de ce principe essentiel: le droit égal à vivre de toutes les croyances, et le devoir égal pour chacun de respecter ce que respecte son voisin. J'estime qu'en le rappelant si nettement, Gandhi s'est montré le vrai héritier de Ramakrishna.[5]

But if Gandhi was the heir of Ramakrishna as Rolland rightly assumes, was not he by the same token the incarnation of the great moral and spiritual forces - the same forces which inspired the great heroes of ancient Vedic India? By stressing the moral and spiritual aspect of Gandhism, Rolland has indirectly thrown light on the moral values of the great Vedic tradition which remained little affected during the three centuries of foreign domination over India. It was mainly due to these ancient moral and spiritual values that modern India was reawakened and was consequently able to win its independence. It was not by force that freedom was won but rather by what Vedanta preaches - love - and Rolland shows that he understood this very well when he writes about Gandhi's success thus: "L'indomptable ténacité et la magie de la grande âme opéraient: la force plia les genoux devant l'héroïque douceur."[6] It is precisely this 'héroïque douceur' which he wanted the West to taste for, evidently, Gandhi's apostleship of non-violence came to him at a time when his deep-rooted hatred of war had reached its zenith. Hence the great enthusiasm with which he welcomed the Mahatma's message of love and brotherhood and above all his philosophy of Non-Violence, "cette parole magique, sublime message que l'Inde adresse au monde".[7] The power that such a philosophy can generate was no secret to him. Even at a time when he reached the conclusion that even violence could prove effective in bringing about peace, he did not reject the Gandhian philosophy. From 1927 onwards he believed that Non-Violence could not be practiced in the West. His oscillation between violence and non-violence became apparent. However, this does not, in the least, mean that he was completely disappointed with Non-Violence: personally he would never practice violence. Besides, his great love of humanity excluded the idea of sufferings necessarily inflicted by war upon thousands of innocent victims.

The search for Truth, so dear to all Vedantists, was among Gandhi's main preoccupations in life. According to Rolland, it was the very raison d'être of the Mahatma and we believe that this judgement is justifiable considering the fact that the latter made of that search a very serious life experiment to which he dedicated himself tenaciously. However, we have to point out that his method of pursuing Truth was not, obviously, similar to that of a mystic. But to Rolland it was, as such, more attractive to the West particularly when he considered Gandhi's conclusion that

Truth is God. In this belief, he found echoes of Vivekananda's conception of Universal Religion. Here again he is far from being wrong: it is well known that the Mahatma did observe many of Vivekananda's principles. Furthermore, we are inclined to believe that his assumption that there is much in common in the thought of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and Gandhi, is highly plausible, when considered in the light of Vedantic principles.

The main aspect of Indian thought which captivated Rolland's admiration first was its all-embracing and flexible features:

> But amid all the beliefs of Europe and of Asia, that of the Indian Brahmins seems to me infinitely the most alluring...And the reason why I love the Brahmin more than the other schools of Asiatic thought is because it seems to me to contain them all. Greater than all European philosophies, it is even capable of adjusting itself to the vast hypothesis of modern science.[8]

Hence his great admiration for Vivekananda's conception of a Universal Gospel. The impact of this particular aspect of Indian thought on him was so great that it did not take him long to find in that thought the very elements that could "désaltérer la grande soif du monde".[9] It was precisely with such a conviction that he decided to become an active votary of Vedantic philosophy without, however, forsaking his European nature. Like Gandhi or any Vedantist, he chose to be true to himself. So do his Jean-Christophe, his Annette and his Marc. Parallel to Gandhi's search for Truth is Rolland's truth-worshipping. His intense passion for sincerity in both action and thought is no secret to all his admirers. Similarly his great admiration for the moral greatness of his heroes does not surprise us. As early as 1923 he had recognized in Gandhi an exceptionally great moral figure: "L'individualité de Gandhi est d'une grandeur sans égale dans le monde aujourd'hui: une harmonie unique de génie moral et de génie d'action."[10] These two unique qualities he found in Ramakrishna and Vivekananda equally besides both these spiritual saints had

> réalisé, avec un charme et une puissance incomparables, cette splendide symphonie de l'Ame Universelle [et] depuis un siècle, surgi de l'Inde renouvelée, réveillé les antiques énergies de leur terre, et fait refleurir sur elle un printemps de pensée.[11]

The great homage that he has paid to them shows clearly how deep was his conviction of their being spiritual heroes par excellence.

What Rolland admired most in the teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda is the Vedantic conception of the omnipresence of God. Welcoming this conception he writes:

> D'accord avec les Védantistes pour admettre que le divin est dans l'Ame, et que l'âme est dans tout - que l'Atman est Brahman - je n'ai pas besoin d'enfermer Dieu entre les frontières d'un homme privilégié: c'est encore, à mes yeux, une forme (qui s'ignore) de 'nationalisme' de l'esprit; je ne l'accepte point. Je vois le 'Dieu' dans tout ce qui existe. Je le vois tout entier dans le moindre segment, comme dans le Tout Cosmique.[12]

Having accepted this cardinal Vedantic conception, he naturally admired the idea of all-embracing unity which his spiritual heroes preached. Besides, Ramakrishna had explored all religions and had come to the conclusion that they all lead to the same God by different paths. Hence his advice regarding the love of fellow human beings "dans tous leurs Dieux".[13] Such a broadmindedness could have come but from a man gifted with "le génie d'épouser toutes les âmes du monde".[14] So impressed was Rolland by this 'homme-Dieux' that he decided to take from him "un peu de son eau sacrée,"[15] On the personal level, Ramakrishna had shown him the light regarding the mystical experience:

> Je viens de retrouver la clef d'un escalier perdu, qui mène à quelques-unes de ces âmes défendues. L'escalier, dans le mur, lové comme un serpent, se déroule du fond des souterrains du Moi jusqu'aux hautes terrasses dont couronne le front la chevelure des étoiles. Rien de ce que j'ai vu là ne m'était paysage inconnu. Tout cela, je l'avais vu déjà, et je le savais bien, mais je ne savais pas où. J'avais plus d'une fois récité de mémoire - non sans fautes la leçon de pensée, que j'avais jadis apprise (mais de qui? d'un de mes moi très anciens...) Je la relis aujourd'hui, au clair et au complet, dans le livre de vie que me tend le génial illettré qui en savait par coeur toutes les pages: Ramakrishna.[16]

In return, the French biographer enthusiastically made it a point of duty to make him and his disciple, Vivekananda, known to the West by popularizing their thought.

That Vivekananda had made a greater impression on Rolland is quite evident and the main reason for this, according to the latter, is that he recognized himself in not only the spiritual leader but also in Gandhi: "Gandhi et Vivekananda, malgré leur essence de l'Inde antique, ont pris beaucoup à l'Occident. Nous nous reconnaissons en eux."[17]

Indeed, it is with great joy that Rolland draws our attention to the broadmindedness with which Vivekananda looked at the spiritual heritage and scientific progress of the West. But what is most interesting is the influence of the spiritual leader's ideas on the French biographer. It is with enthusiasm that the latter shares his hero's contention that the salvation of mankind depends on the meeting of the materialism of the West with the rich spirituality of the East. It is with a similar enthusiasm that he welcomes Vivekananda's idea of a Gospel of Energy. His emphasis on the absolute necessity of worshipping God in all His manifestations - from the most graceful one to the most terrible one, is particularly appealing to Rolland who recognizes in it a very significant aspect of the spiritual leader's personality: "Nous retrouvons ici, au paroxysme, la volonté d'héroïsme, qui est l'âme de toute l'action de Vivekananda."[18] Equally appealing to him is the great respect that Vivekananda's teachings pay to the freedom and the faith of the individual:

> On admirera ce respect de toute individualité et de sa liberté. Aucune religion ne l'a possédé, à ce dégré. Et c'est la religion même de Vivekananda. Car son Dieu, quel est-il, sinon tous les vivants et chacun de ces vivants en son libre développement?[19]

By telling us that Vivekananda's God is all living beings, he is obviously evoking the very basis of Vedantic teachings. That he believes in this Vedantic conception of the divinity of man, is worth mentioning, and regarding the question of freedom, he has been one of its most tenacious votaries all his life.

Vivekananda's religion as a whole, is quite attractive to Rolland because it is all-embracing. In the biographer's eyes, religion and universalism of the mind are synonymous to Vivekananda. Is it surprising then, that the Swami's religion accepts science? Besides, as Rolland points out, the Swami joyfully welcomed the diversity of religions and thoughts for he "cherchait à y [son advaïtisme] annexer toutes les énergies que les autres races et les autres religions avaient mises au service de cette conquête héroïque".[20] Rolland is particularly delighted at the spirit of tolerance that characterizes the Swami's religious views. It is mainly because the latter has been able to harmonize Reason and Faith, that he finds in him the personality from whom Europe has much to learn. There is no doubt in his mind that if Religion and Science were to come to terms, the whole world would have benefited and he feels certain that *Advaitic Vedanta* can bring about that rapprochement when he reveals his faith in that philosophy thus:

> Au sommet, l'Ara Maxima, la lanterne du dôme, la flèche de la cathédrale, l'*Ashram* de tous les *Ashrams*, l'*Advaita* bâti sur les Himalayas, pour la rencontre des deux moitiés de la terre, Occident et Orient, pour le confluent de toutes les races humaines, en l'absolue Unité[21]

in the course of his account of his spiritual hero, Vivekananda. This faith in the validity of the *Advaita* philosophy was not in the least a passing one: we find echoes of it in his great novel, *L'Ame Enchantée* particularly in its last volume, the composition of which was postponed when the author embarked upon his study of Indian thought. Explaining about that postponement he wrote:

> Et je laisse mûrir le dernier volume de l'Ame Enchantée. C'est là qu'enfin dévêtue des derniers voiles qui la recouvrent, 'descenchantée' l'Ame éveillée, l'Ame nue, doit contempler le corps de Dieu.[22]

Already evident in what he was implying was the knowledge of Nirvikalpa Aamadhi (Final stage of contemplation which results in the union with the Absolute) with which he was dealing in his work on Ramakrishna at that time. To this very knowledge he was going to have recourse to end his great novel, as we will see shortly. In yet another letter we find a clear indication that he had in fact used his knowledge of Indian thought in the novel. Writing to his personal Indian friend, Kalidas Nag, about his new work, he said: "...je crois que vous m'y sentirez, en beaucoup de pages, encore plus proche de l'âme de l'Inde et de la vôtre."[23] Those intellectuals who are familiar with Indian thought and who, like Prof. M.L. Balsé[24] have reached the conclusion that the novel is imbued with Indian thought, are far from exaggerating. But let us now turn to the novel itself.

In Rolland's L'Ame Enchantée, the most prominent qualities common to Annette and her son, Marc, are: courage, frankness and independence. Besides being himself, Marc, the young combatant, is truly her "fruit" and both carry on their battle in the same world - that of "l'universelle

Illusion"[25] which Vedantists call *Maya* and about which Rolland had learnt and planned to deal with:

> Eté 1924. Eloigné de Paris, malade, solitaire, et cherchant à m'évader de l'action, je m'étais repris aux chaînes fortunés d'un nouveau cycle de romans. Afin de mieux me fuir, j'avais émigré en la vie d'une femme, d'une *Ame enchantée*: ce titre énigmatique auquel presque tous les lecteurs se sont trompés, - et je le voulais ainsi -, car mon objet caché était, en dévidant le fil de cette vie, de la démailloter d'une robe après l'autre des illusions de la vie, de la 'désenchanter'. Et juste à ce moment où, pour elle et pour moi, je m'appliquais à ce progressif désensorcellement de la tragique *Maya* de l'existence, j'allais moi-même y rentrer, je n'avais pas fini d'en faire le tour. Il me fallait y faire encore un stage.[26]

It was only after his study of Indian thought that the work on the novel was resumed and as a result the last volume was richer in thought.

Regarding the rôle of Annette in that world of *Maya*, Rolland defines it for us thus:

> Elle réclame son droit, sa loi, sa joie, - sa souffrance aussi, mais sa souffrance sienne - la Maternité.
>
> Toute la Maternité. Pas seulement celle du fils. Fils heureux, malheureux, vous vous déchirez. Mais je vous étreins tous. Votre premier sommeil, je le berce en mes bras. Dormez! Je suis la Mère universelle...[27]

Such is her reaction in the presence of the horrors of war, for let it be noted, she is not frightened by war: "Tout est guerre... La guerre sous le masque... Je n'ai point peur de te voir à visage découvert."[28] Such a courage is to be found in Marc also and in both it seems to be their most faithful companion till the end. Incidentally, Rolland was quite familiar with the *Gita* symbol of life as a battlefield at the time of writing the novel we are dealing with. For Annette, for Marc and for Rolland himself, the task is sacrifice - to serve others in the Vedantic way - to help "l'Enfantement d'une nouvelle humanité."[29] This is what Rolland means when he points out that even for personal salvation one has to participate in social action through self-sacrifice:

> Il faut, pour sauver même l'âme individuelle de la consomption qui la ronge, la retremper dans la cuve bouillante de l'Ame sociale, par le don actif de soi à la communauté en marche et en combat.[30]

As the biographer of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and Gandhi, the three men inspired by Vedantic thought, he knew only too well that they had practised and preached precisely what he wanted Westerners to do. In other words, the potential validity of self-sacrifice was no longer a secret to him for he knew the meaning of Karma-yoga and nowhere is his knowledge of it so evident than in the definition of the rôle of the main characters he has created:

> Jean-Christophe, Colas, Clérambault, Annette et son fils, vivent et meurent pour tous les hommes. Il ne leur viendrait pas à l'idée de séparer leur cause de celle de la communauté - même 'l'Un contre Tous', qui leur résiste, pour s'en servir. Ils s'unissent à lui, ou en esprit et dans les oeuvres qu'ils modèlent, ou par leur sacrifice personnel. Ils sont eux-mêmes un peuple - un peuple du travail, toujours en marche. Leur individualité est, par essence, collective.[31]

In his fight against individualism we can see an echo of Vivekananda's own. According to the latter, man is not an individuality but can and should work his way to the only individuality who is the Absolute.[32] Hence Rolland's emphasis on the 'Un'. He admits that he had made a grave mistake in overestimating the 'esprits libres', the 'individualistes' and become quite bitter when he found out that they were not authentic ones:

> Il ne sont pourtant pas de purs esprits. Ils savent s'entendre avec la vie. Ce sont d'admirables domestiques.
>
> J'ai exprimé mon amertume, dans les avant-derniers volumes de *L'Ame Enchantée*. Les expériences du jeune Marc, *se débattant dans le désert de l'individualisme*, ont été les miennes. Mais j'avais sur Marc l'avantage de soixante ans d'une vie d'épreuves qui tannent la peau... *Gaudet patientia duris*...[33]

What he cares for is genuine sacrifice in action. In *L'Ame Enchantée* particularly, the sacrifice of Annette and Marc is greater for, as the author points out, they knew beforehand that they were going to pay for it: "Le sacrifice est au bout. Marc et Annette savent qu'ils paieront. Et dès novembre 1918, la *Mater Dolorosa* porte d'avance le deuil de son fils."[34] It is thus that true sacrifice is defined in Indian thought and that Rolland endorses the conception goes without mentioning. In his paper on Gandhi entitled 'Le Christ Des Indes' read at the Geneva International India Day on October 6, 1932, he talks of "l'exemple victorieux de ce que Gandhi lui même à nommé: 'l'épée du sacrifice de soi'".[35] His faith in the validity of true self-sacrifice was constant and unshakeable till the end for, both he and Marc worked for harmony between the principal antagonists. In Marc's case the sacrifice was greater for he died in harness: he was murdered while trying to protect a young man from cruel treatment. His faith in mankind is comparable to Rolland's own and his endeavor to better its lot reminds us of what the French writer has stressed in his work on Ramakrishna: service to mankind. It is not for nothing that he draws our attention to the following words of the great spiritual leader: "Jiva est Civa (L'être vivant est Dieu). Qui peut parler de miséricorde à lui montrer? Point de miséricorde, mais le servir, en regardant l'homme comme Dieu."[36] Like Rolland, both Annette and Marc do not believe in the God of the Church. However, they do share with him the sense of the Divine and they find their God in action:

> Et loin de se retirer dans le rêve de l'Un, qui lui avait ouvert la flûte du chevrier, elle en puisait, par ses racines, du fond de la terre, les énergies; et elle les transfusait dans l'action. Que serait l'Un, si le sang de l'action n'y circulait point? L'Un est en acte. L'Un est en marche. S'il s'arrêtait un seul moment, tout croulerait.[37]

Like Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, they remain "en communion divine avec l'humanité vivante, aimante et souffrante".[38] The importance given to action in the novel is only too evident: Rolland wants his characters to find their salvation in action for he believes that absence of active participation is responsible for the deterioration of social life. There is too much talking of action but nobody is acting:

> Mais ils parlaient. Faute d'agir! Ils parlaient, parlaient d'action qu'ils ne faisaient pas, qu'ils ne pouvaient pas. Ils sortaient de là vidé et écoeurés, de soi et de l'autre...Action! Action! O flancs de l'action, à féconder!...Un peuple sain a toujours besoin d'un but offert à ses efforts... Mieux vaut le crime que le vide écoeurant d'une vie

> qui sèche, inféconde![39]

The importance that Rolland attaches to action in this novel reminds us of the predominant role played by action free from attachment in the *Gita*. Like Arjuna, Annette and Marc have to find their salvation by acting disinterestedly in the thick of the fight. While the mother is like "un nageur robuste qui veut traverser un fleuve, et va contre le courant. Ou comme ces migrateurs qui foncent contre le vent"[40] the son, like Vivekananda[41] "'tiré à quatre chevaux', incarne cet effort désespéré pour réaliser 'le miel noir des dissonnances'".[42] Even when Marc is murdered, his fight is continued by the mother. Obviously, in Rolland's world *Karma-yoga* goes on for it is the only hope to attain harmony:

> On n'est pas un homme (vous, moi, lui) - si l'on ne s'est affronté à la vie dans son terrier, et si l'on n'y a laissé des morceaux de sa peau. Il faut, il faut passer par l'ordure et l'épine.[43]

It is only too evident that both Annette and Marc show, through their self-sacrifice, that they have done exactly what Rolland is suggesting here. They have served humanity as the latter has done through art.

While dealing with Rolland's meeting with Gandhi, we referred to the great importance that both men attach to *Satyam* (Truth). Rolland was very much fascinated by the Mahatma's great search for Truth for he, too, was a great lover of Truth: "Elle (la vérité) est ma plus haute passion. Je me croirais deshonoré, si j'y manquais."[44] But what is more interesting to note is the fact that, like Gandhi, he finds God in Truth:

> Je suis certain que, si Dieu est, il est avec toutes les âmes sincéres et desintéressées. Si elles se trompent, elles sont à plaindre et non à condamner. Mais leur devoir suprême est, d'abord de ne pas mentir à soi-même. Et rien ne m'ôtera de la pensée cette conviction qu'ainsi elles sont fidèles à la mission qu'elles ont reçu de Dieu. Dieu est la Vérité. Si une âme vraie se trompe, qui peut dire que cette erreur n'est pas dans le plan de Dieu, - que cette erreur sincère n'est pas voulue, bénie par Dieu? Soyons tous humbles et tolérants, à l'égard les uns des autres.[45]

What he is asserting here, he not only made his own credo, but also that of Annette and Marc in L'Ame Enchantée. As a matter of fact, the idea of being true to oneself broods over the whole story of these two charcters. In Annette, it manifests itself right from the beginning when she is faced with the decision of accepting Roger Brissot's proposal:

> Mais je voudrais qu'en échange de don mutuel de sa fidèle tendresse, chacun gardât le droit de vivre selon son âme, de marcher dans sa voie, de chercher sa vérité, de s'assurer, s'il le faut, son champ d'activité propre, d'accomplir en un mot la loi propre de sa vie spirituelle, et de ne pas la sacrifier à la loi d'un autre, même de l'être le plus cher: car nul être n'a le droit d'immoler à soi l'âme d'un autre, ni la sienne à un autre. C'est un crime.[46]

Such is Rolland's definition of being true to oneself. Annette's faithfulness to it is nowhere more evident than in her refusal to marry Roger. She is destined to form a new morality by adding "la franchise et l'humanité"[47] to the old one. On this new morality, Rolland places emphasis throughout the novel. He comes back to it again and again. When he tells us that poverty has lead Annette to the discovery of the real world, he reminds us of it thus:

> A la lumière nouvelle de cette loi du travail, tout s'éclairait pour elle. Les anciennes croyances étaient mises à l'épreuve. Et une nouvelle morale, sur les ruines de l'ancienne, s'élevait cimentée sur cette base héroïque. Morale de la franchise, morale de la force, non du pharisaïsme et de la débilité...[48]

There is no doubt in his mind that the betterment of society depends entirely on this 'nouvelle morale' which is "la seule vraie morale, selon la vie vraie...une morale d'harmonie".[49]

Another aspect of Truth which all Vedantists preach and which Gandhi practiced and stressed is the necessity of being true to oneself. Rolland reminds us of this principle in his work on Vivekananda and shows his approval of it. In L'Ame Enchantée, he makes of it the guiding principle of both Annette and Marc. Even in moments of crisis they choose to suffer rather than to have recourse to self-deception or to yield to cowardice. Annette, for instance, "ne pouvait pas se mentir"[50] regarding the priority she gives to her love for Philippe over her concern for her child. In this attitude we can find an excellent example of being true to oneself: on one side is her love for Philippe on the other her passion for Truth and she chooses to be faithful to both for both are very much part of her nature. It is a response to the "besoins profonds de l'âme"[51] and those who want to understand such an attitude fully have to be "plus religieusement libres"[52] than young French Catholics like Roger or Marcel. She is not only against self-deception but also against any attempt at denying the laws of nature and since war is part of these laws, according to Rolland, she "accepte la guerre, comme elle accepte la mort, comme elle accepte la vie".[53] She is brave enough to bear "les sept péchés, les vices, et même la cruauté"[54] but if there is one thing that she categorically refuses to pardon, it is indeed hypocrisy. Hence the following advice to her young child: "Si laid, si bas que tu sois, sois vrai!"[55] This is precisely what Marc does till the end. However, Annette feels it is her bounden duty to see to it that her young son knows fully what it is to be frank in life and she defines it for him thus:

> La franchise est d'être franc dans chacune de ses pensées, de ne tromper personne, ni surtout soi, sur ce que l'on croit. Mais elle n'exige pas de nous l'impossible: que nous agissons toujours et uniquement selon ce que nous croyons. Notre esprit seul est libre. Notre corps est enchaîné. Nous sommes enclavés dans une société. Nous subissons un ordre. Nous ne pourrions le détruire sans nous détruire.[56]

Thus we see in this definition Rolland's faith in truth and his awareness of our servile existence in the world of Maya where Annette is 'enchantée.' In the best manner of Vedantists he suggests that one has to search for Truth in order to liberate himself from Maya. This is what he makes Annette explain to Marc who tends to believe that life itself will disappear if falsehood is eradicated:

> - Si le mensonge disparaissait tout à fait de la vie, la vie ne disparaîtrait-elle pas? N'est-ce pas lui qui entretient la grande Illusion?
> - Si elle ne peut se passer de lui, si elle est la grande Illusion, c'est qu'elle n'est pas la vraie Vie. La vraie Vie est au-delà. Il faut la retrouver.
> - Où est-elle?

> - En moi. En toi. Dans ce besoin de vérité. Comment nous posséderait-il, si elle ne soufflait en nous?[57]

These are words that the young Marc will never forget. Nor will he forget the figure of the Mother - Mater Dolorosa in Annette:

> Et, dans la pensée fiévreuse de Marc, elle reparut: - La Mère...Sa fière image et son silence, sa vie d'épreuves et de passions non profanés, son âme intacte, sans mensonge, son mépris des mots, les profondeurs de sa solitude sans compagnon, et cette intransigeante volonté, contre laquelle il s'était cabré, qu'il avait maudite, qu'il benissait aujourd'hui, son inflexible loi de vérité...[58]

This 'inflexible loi de vérité' is the same that Kali, the Indian 'Mother', imposed upon Ramakrishna who, like Marc, saw in the vision of Kali "le seul moyen de survivre".[59] Indeed, Marc's faithfulness to that law of truth is the very essence of his nature which he does not betray. When, in the end Annette asks Assia why she will not leave Marc, the latter reveals her deep thought thus:

> - Pour quoi? Comment je l'aime?...Je l'aime, comme on aime, - parce qu'on a faim. Mais on n'a pas seulement faim du corps. Cette faim-là, on la trompe. Je l'ai plus d'une fois trompée. - Mais il y a l'autre faim, qu'on ne peut pas tromper, et qui ne se trompe pas: j'ai faim de propreté. Et votre fils est vrai, il est propre de pensée. Il est propre comme vous...Allons! je sais ce que je dis. Et vous le savez aussi...Croyez-vous que l'on s'y trompe, quand on s'est, comme moi, six années débattue dans le croupissoir de ces âmes d'aujourd'hui? Et que, lorsqu'on en rencontre une, intacte, qui émerge, on ne se jette pas dessus?[60]

Such is the assessment of Marc's character by somebody who has seen him "nu de chair et nu d'âme"[61] and the reader who follows the young man in his experiences can hardly disagree with Assia. With him it is not simply a matter of observing the law of truth but also of putting it into practice: no sooner has he adopted it than he imposes it upon his friends: "Sois ce que tu veux! Fais ce que tu veux! Si tu veux, fuis! Mais dis: - Je fuis!"[62] These very friends are far from erring when they tell him that he is "le meilleur juge"[63] and we cannot possibly deny him this honour simply because there is much of Rolland himself in the young hero: "Ils se livraient, en mon esprit, '*ce duel d'âme*', dont je me suis déchargé sur les épaules du jeune Marc..."[64] In Marc, Rolland points out, this 'duel-d'âme' are the "forces opposées de sa nature"[65] and therefore he cannot do anything about it but "qu'il soit franc!"[66] Whatever be the circumstances, Marc never betrays his nature and one can almost feel the joy with which Rolland draws our attention to this essential facet of his hero's character, thus:

> Mais il y a toujours au fond le Marc, le Marcassin, qui se reprend dès qu'on le prend, d'un coup de boutoir, d'un dur éclair... Il n'en est que plus attirant. On s'y meurtrit. Double plaisir![67]

It is precisely as such that Marc is worthy of being the son of Annette and both have the same aim in life which is to "revendiquer leur âme indépendante contre toutes les fatalités qui l'oppressent"[68] for Rolland wants both to be 'desenchantés' at the end of their journey in the world of *Maya* where their souls cannot breathe freely and where their only hope to achieve their aim is the path of *Satyam* (Truth).

In order to understand fully what Rolland has tried to portray in the story of Annette and Marc one has to pay due attention to the importance he gives to _Maya_ when he reveals that each volume of _L'Ame Enchantée_ is "un compartiment de la grande Illusion"[69] whose "force essentielle, le pouvoir d'illusion et de rêve, l'élan vital...crée perpétuellement et renouvelle, '_le grand Magicien_'."[70] This power of illusion is in both Annette and Marc and consequently they are 'enchantés.' If the title of the novel does not include Marc it is, in our eyes, simply because he is a projection of Annette's own soul: "Je suis _de_ toi. Je suis celui que tu m'as fait."[71] Thus both are under the spell of the same 'grande Illusion' and to free themselves from it they have to go through a process which Vedantists call purification through _yogas_. This is no doubt what Rolland means by:

> 'L'Ame Enchantée' se dépouille, au long de sa vie, des tissus d'illusions qui la recouvrent. A chaque tissu qui tombe, elle se croit nue. Mais un autre tissu se substitue au prédédent.[72]

But Annette has to get rid of every 'tissu d'illusions' before she can liberate her soul like the yogi in _Nirvikalpa Samadhi_ (final stage of contemplation) and Rolland, who has already interpreted this means of liberation to the West, wants his Annette to use it in her own manner. This is what he means when he says: "C'est là qu'enfin dévêtue des derniers voiles qui la recouvrent, 'desenchantée' l'Ame éveillée, l'Ame nue, doit contempler le corps de Dieu."[73] If this liberation of the soul and final meeting with God is made through death in Annette's case it is because like Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, Rolland believes that very few can come back to the world of the living after the union with the Absolute.

But what about Marc? Does he, too, find salvation in the way Annette does? Rolland answers in a positive way with the final part of his novel entitled 'l'Enfantement' by which he means: "Enfantement d'une époque par le sacrifice volontaire d'une génération. Et enfantement de la Mère par le Fils."[74] It is true that Marc died prematurely but so did Vivekananda and both had their experience in "la cuve bouillante de l'Ame sociale"[75] and each in his own way had proved himself "par le don actif de soi à la communauté en marche et en combat".[76] In Marc's case, the task was equally hard and he never yielded to cowardice even when the temptation to flee kept torturing him. Doggedly, he continued his fight through a world "qui meurt"[77] but he had to pay with his blood for his achievement:

> Il en arrache de sa peau, en s'ensanglantant, les mensonges et les sanies. Il les dénonce, et tombe, au seuil de l'ère nouvelle, que l'âpre et nue Confession de toute sa vie a préparée.[78]

His death, however, did not interrupt his fight for the good work had to continue; therefore Rolland masterfully brings in two worthy souls to step in his shoes: Annette and Assia:

> Mais sa mort même est une naissance... '*Stirb und werde!*...' Il se revèle, et continue, dans le sein des deux femmes qui l'ont porté, l'amante et la mère. Annette reprend la montée de l'escalier, à l'échelon même où le pied de son fils s'est arrêté. Et le fils monte, avec la mère. Il est en elle.

> Annette le dit à Assia: 'Les lois du monde sont renversées. Je l'ai enfanté. Et c'est lui qui m'enfante, à son tour.'[79]

Hence the way Marc, too, finds his way out of the world of Maya. In other words, by accepting the pure and noble intentions of her late son, Annette, so to speak, accepts his very soul. The death of Marc, by giving a new vigour to the fight through Annette, causes the 'enfantement'. Hence the meaning of the 'enfantement de la Mère par le Fils.'

Rolland tells us that he met Marc for the first time in a small hotel near the Sorbonne at a time when the latter was busy studying his (Rolland's) work on Gandhi which he had found at his mother's place. He was very much impressed by the Mahatma's doctrine of Non-Violence (Ahimsa) and under its influence he "traitait de crime toute contrainte exercée sur l'âme d'une autre".[80] When he met the author who had introduced the Gandhian thought to him, he naturally availed himself of that golden opportunity to discuss that thought with him. Recalling his meeting with Marc, Rolland writes:

> Ce n'était pas la première fois qu'on me consultait sur l'itinèraire de la vie: j'étais une sorte d'Agence des voyages; et j'avais dirigé plus d'un jeune homme ou d'une femme, ou vers l'Asie ou vers Moscou: car plus d'une porte dans ses prunelles le reflet d'une des étoiles qui se lèvent à l'Orient.[81]

Although Marc confessed his approval of Gandhi's doctrine to Rolland, the latter realised that such an approval went against the "fièvre d'agir"[82] which was true to the young man's nature. Hence the following advice from Rolland: "Votre vérité est votre nature. Ne trahissez, ne violentez votre nature en épousant celle d'un autre!"[83] This is exactly the advice he gives to Westerners when he invites them to taste Indian thought:

> Aiglons d'Europe, nous n'avons rien à abdiquer de notre vraie nature. Notre vraie nature, elle est dans ce nid, d'où nous avons jadis pris notre essor; elle est en ceux qui ont su garder les clefs de notre donjon - du Moi Souverain.[84]

Therefore, according to Rolland, Non-Violence was not convenient to Marc's nature. However, Gandhism was not totally useless to him: there was the law of truth which was more suitable to his nature:

> Quoi qu'il en fût, merci à ceux qui lui parlaient selon la loi, la loi unique de vérité! Car il comprenait maintenant, mieux que jamais, que cette loi était la sienne: c'était sa mission d'être vrai. Souffrir, errer, se contredire, même tomber et se souiller mais être vrai! On se relèvera. On se lavera. Une âme vraie ne peut pas être damnée. Le ver de la mort ne peut ronger l'incorruptible vérité. Et le coeur de Marc se gonflait à la pensée que cette loi propre de vérité, dont sa nature était marquée, était aussi, sans qu'il l'êut su, le noyau de l'âme de ce Gandhi, vers qui un instinct aveugle de défense l'avait poussé, - bien qu'il ne dût pas suivre la même voie. (Je lui avais révélé le Credo du petit homme frêle et imbrisable, qui conduisait trois cent millions d'hommes: - 'La Vérité est Dieu').[85]

Thus it was Rolland himself who put Marc on the right track which was the path of Truth. But however valid Marc's thought was, Rolland points out, the time was not ready for it and meanwhile the young combatant was well advised to feed the body, the author of the thought. In order to give more weight to his suggestion he quotes the following thought of Ramakrishna: "Point de Dieu pour les ventres creux!"[86] Later in the novel, he comes back to this thought when he tells us about Sylvie's endeavour to help the poor:

"L'argent manquait, les petits becs étaient en gouffre, et la parole de Dieu, ou de Sylvie, ne nourrit pas les ventres creux!"[37] Rolland's obsession regarding the meeting of the thought of the East and that of the West has found its way in L'Ame Enchantée equally. In Annette's thought, he wants us to see Buddha's when he writes:

> La même pensée qui, dans les veines de Gautama, est le sourire du Nirvâna, dans celles d'une fille d'Europe est le sourire éginétique d'Athéna dans le combat.[38]

In the encounter of her thought with that of India we are to see more good than harm:

> Quand elle se reconnait dans cette rivière, aux moires enchevêtrées, où son Saint-Bruno de l'Himalaya lui montre l'image de moi aux myriades d'individualités, - quand elle y voit, parmi les autres, passer sa moire, et toute la ronde qui s'achemine, en tournoyant, vers l'Océan ainsi que le cortège de Bacchus indien - il n'y a point de risque que cette sagesse, ce délire sacré de l'Asie, qui réveille dans l'âme d'Europe de profonds échos (car elles sont filles de la même mère), lui fasse perdre sa dévorante activité. Elle ne se perd dans cette masse en mouvement que pour s'y retrouver multipliée.[39]

But there is more to be noted in what Rolland is asserting here. What is quite relevant is his strong faith in the beneficent outcome of the meeting of the thought of East with that of the West. No sooner had he come into contact with Indian thought than he felt that Europe needed that thought:

> il est devenu évident que l'Europe ne suffit plus à se sauver soi-même. Sa pensée a besoin de la pensée d'Asie, comme celle-ci a profit a s'appuyer sur la pensée d'Europe. Ce sont les deux hémisphères du cerveau de l'humanité.[40]

In his eyes, Western thought has more to gain than to lose by meeting that of the East. By his own admission, his own thought was enriched through his study of Indian thought. Hence, the fact that he allows his heroine, Annette, to be influenced by Indian wisdom which came to her through her friendship for Count Bruno, the archeologist working in India. By relating Annette's thought to that of Buddha and by allowing her to be influenced by Indian wisdom, Rolland is evidently showing that a meeting of the East and the West is not only quite possible but also highly desirable. This had been his dream since 1915. His use of Indian thought in L'Ame Enchantée should hardly come as a surprise to those who are aware of this dream.

Finally, we come to the question of Rolland's fascination for the mystical union with the Absolute. In his account of Ramakrishna's union with the Absolute, he tells us that love for the Mother had revealed to the spiritual leader that whoever wants to contemplate God must first shed all his prejudices. In L'Ame Enchantée, Annette's soul is no more 'enchantée' and 'nue' when it identifies itself with the supreme Being:

> L'âme écrasée, distendue, se dilate, elle fait chair
> avec l'Etre souverain. En l'évident, il l'incorpore:
> - 'Tu es mienne, et je suis tien.'
> O plénitude! Identité!''

In other words, at the time of the ultimate union with the Absolute, the soul has no longer any ties whatsoever with the world of Maya. Rolland prepares Annette for this ultimate union by gradually taking her out of the "rets des illusions"[12] in the same way the yogas prepare the yogi for the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* in which the contemplation of the absolute takes place. Thus, the parallel is striking.

At the beginning of this chapter we have quoted Rolland to show that Indian thought had influenced his own thought. There is no doubt in our mind that this influence is evident in *L'Ame Enchantée*, a novel in which he has, by his own admission,[13] expressed his deep thought as he has done in his work on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. To those who are quite familiar with his work on Indian thought, the influence of that thought in *L'Ame Enchantée* is hardly surprising: most of the aspects to which he draws the attention of Western readers reappear in the novel under different shades. Whether it is the conception of *Maya* or Gandhi's *Ahimsa*, we feel certain that Rolland has put his knowledge of Indian thought to good use. Since he felt that his thought was enriched by its contact with Indian thought,[14] we may safely conclude that the influence has done more good than harm to the novel.

1 Romain Rolland, *La Vie de Vivekananda et l'Evangile Universel*, (Paris: Editions Stock, 1966), p. 255.
Prophets of the New India, trans. E.F. Malcolm-Smith, (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1930), p. 468.

> "And that is where we find the hand our allies, the thinkers of India, stretched out to meet us: for they have known for centuries past how to entrench themselves in the *Feste Burg* and how to defend it, while we, their brethren of the Great Invasions, have spent our strength in conquering the rest of the world. Let us stop and recover our breath! Let us lick our wounds! Let us return to our eagle's nest in the Himalayas. It is waiting for us, for it is ours. Eaglets of Europe, we need not renounce any part of our real nature. Our real nature is in the nest, whence we formerly took our flight; it dwells within those who have known how to keep the keys of our keep - the Sovereign Self. We have only to rest our tired limbs in the great inner lake. Afterwards, my companions, with fever abated and new power flowing through your muscles, you will again resume your Invasions, if you wish to do so. Let a new cycle begin, if it is the Law. But this is the moment to touch Earth again, like Anteus, before beginning a new flight! Embrace it! Let your thoughts return to the Mother! Drink her milk! Her breasts can still nourish all the races of the world.
>
> Among the spiritual ruins strewn all over Europe our 'Mother India' will teach you to excavate the unshakeable foundations of your Capitole. She possesses the calculations and the plans of the 'Master Craftsman'. Let us rebuild our house with our own materials!"

2 Romain Rolland, Ibid., p.228 and cit. transl. p.438

> "And such a religion exists; it is the Advaita of India, Non-Dualism, Unity, the idea of the Absoulte, of the impersonal God: 'The only religion that can have any hold on intellectual people'".

3 Romain Rolland, letter to Mme. Carnat, October 16, 1930, available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris.

> "I have not worked for the victory of the East over the West, but for the reawakening of the true West. Ramakrishna and Vivekananda only call us to the conscience of our being."

4 Romain Rolland, letter to Swami Ashokananda, December 14,

1927, in *Prabuddha Bharata*, May 1928, p. 217.

5 Romain Rolland, *La Vie de Vivekananda et L'Evangile Universel*, p. 267.
Prophets of the New India, pp. 479,480.

> "Nothing more contrary to our Western way of religious and secular thought can be imagined. At the same time there is nothing from which the West and the rest of the modern world can derive more useful teaching. At this stage of human evolution, wherein both blind and conscious forces are driving all natures to draw together for 'Co-operation or death' - it is absolutely essential that the human consciousness should be impregnated with it, until this indispensable principle becomes an axiom: that every faith has an equal right to live, and that there is an equal duty incumbent upon every man to respect that which his neighbour respects. In my opinion Gandhi, when he started it so frankly, showed himself to be the heir of Ramakrishna."

6 Romain Rolland, *Mahatma Gandhi*, (Paris: Editions Stock, 1966), p. 17.

> "The indomitable tenacity and magic of *the great soul* was operating: the power bent the knees before the heroic kindness."

7 Romain Rolland, *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 14.

> "those magic words, the sublime message that India addresses to the world."

8 Romain Rolland, Foreward to, Ananada Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Shiva: Fourteen Indian Essays*, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1948), p. 8.

9 Romain Rolland, *La Vie de Ramakrishna*, (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1973), p. 24.
Prophets of the New India, p. xii.

> "to slake the great thirst of the world."

10 Romain Rolland, letter to his editor, Maurice Delamain, February 7, 1923, in *Gandhi et Romain Rolland: Correspondence*, (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1969), p. 178.
Romain and Gandhi: Correspondence, trans. R.A. Francis (Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1976), p. 362.

"Gandhi's personality is of unequalled grandeur in the world today, a unique harmony of moral and active genius."

11 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Ramakrishna, p. 16.
Prophets of the New India, p. xvi.
"...with incomparable charm and power...realized this splendid symphony of the Universal Soul [and] during the last century have sprung up in reawakened India, serving the ancient energies of their country and bringing about a springtime of thought within her borders."

12 Ibid., p. 23 and cit. transl., p. xi.
"In accordance with the Vedantists I do not need to enclose God within the bounds of a privileged man in order to admit that the Divine dwells within the soul and that the soul dwells in everything - that Atman in Brahman: although it knows not; that view is a form of nationalism of spirit and I cannot accept it. I see God in all that exists. I see Him as completely in the least fragment as in the whole Cosmos."

13 Ibid., p. 85 and cit. transl., p. 52.
"in all their Gods."

14 Ibid., p. 36 and cit. transl., p. 11.
"the genius for espousing all the souls in the world."

15 in order to quench the thirst of the world. Ibid., p. 24 and cit. transl., p. xii.
"a little of his sacred water to slake the great thirst of the world."

16 Ibid., pp. 18-19 and cit. transl., p. xviii.
"I have just rediscovered the key of the lost staircase leading to some of these proscribed souls. The staircase in the wall, spiral like the coils of a serpent, winds from the subterranean depths of the Ego to the high terraces crowned by the stars. But nothing that I saw there was unknown country. I had seen it all before and I knew it well - but I did not know where I had seen it before. More than once I had recited from memory, though imperfectly, the lesson of thought learned at some former time (but from whom? One of my very ancient selves...) Now I

re-read it, every word clear and complete, in the book of life held out to me by the illiterate genius who knew all its pages by heart - Ramakrishna."

17 Romain Rolland, letter to Charles-Marie Garnier, May 11, 1930, in Gandhi et Romain Rolland: Correspondence, p. 251. Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, p. 421.

"Gandhi and Vivekananda, though being of the essence of old India, have absorbed much from the West. We can recognize ourselves in them..."

18 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Vivekananda et l'Evangile Universel, p. 125.

Prophets of the New India, p. 346.

"Once more we see in this paroxysm the will to heroism which to Vivekananda was the soul of action."

19 Ibid., p. 235 and cit. transl., p. 446.

"This respect for human individuality and its freedom is admirable. No other religion has possessed it to this degree, and with Vivekananda it was part of the very essence of his religion. His God was no less than all living beings, and every living being ought therefore to be free to develop."

20 Ibid., p. 333 and cit. transl., p. 548.

"sought to annex [to his Advaitism] all the energies that other races and other religions had used in the service of this heroic conquest."

21 Ibid., p. 273 and cit. transl., pp. 483-484.

"But the summit is the Ara Maxima, the Lantern of the dome, the spire of the cathedral, the Ashram of all Ashrams, the Advaita built on the Himalayas, where the two hemispheres, the West and the East, meet at the confluence of all mankind in absolute Unity."

22 Romain Rolland, unpublished letter to his Japanese friend, Ozaki, June 3, 1927, available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris.

"And I let the final volume of L'Ame Enchantée ripen. It is here that, at last stripped of its last veils which mask it, 'disenchanted', the reawakened Soul, the naked Soul, must contemplate the body of God."

23 Romain Rolland, unpublished letter to his Indian friend, Kalidas Nag, December 24, 1933, available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris.

> "...I think that you will feel my presence there in many pages, much closer to the soul of India and to yours."

24 M.L. Balsé, "Romain Rolland et Tagore", Thèse Présentée à la Faculté des Lettres, Université de Paris, pour le diplôme de Docteur de l'Université, 1952, P. 270.

25 Romain Rolland, *L'Ame Enchantée*, (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1967), p. xvi.

> "the universal Illusion"

26 Romain Rolland, *Le Périple*, (Paris: Editions Emile-Paul Frères, 1946), pp. 147-148.

> "Summer 1924. Away from Paris, sick, alone, and trying to flee from action, I had again given myself the task of writing the fortunate sequences of a new cycle of novels. In order to escape better, I had emigrated into the life of a woman, of an *Enchanted Soul*: this enigmatic title about which almost all readers have been mistaken, - and I wanted it to be so -, for my hidden aim was, by unwinding the thread of this life, to unswaddle it from one gown of illusions of life after another, to 'disenchant' it. And just at that time when, for her and for me, I was applying myself to that progressive disenchantment of the tragic *Maya* of Existence, I was myself getting into it, I had not finished circumscribing it. I still had one stage to do."

27 Romain Rolland, *L'Ame Enchantée*, p. 538.
The Soul Enchanted, Vol. 3 "Mother and Son", trans. Van Wyck Brooks, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1927), p. 14.

> "She reclaimed her right, her law, her joy and her suffering also, but her own suffering - Maternity.
>
> The whole Maternity. Not merely that of her son. You are all my sons. Happy and unhappy sons, you are wounding yourselves. But I clasp you all. Your first sleep, your last sleep, I rock in my arms. Sleep! I am the universal Mother."

28 Ibid., p. 435 and cit. transl., p. 3.

> "Everything is war...war under a mask...I am not afraid to meet you face to face."

29 Ibid., p. xvii.
"giving birth of a new humanity."

30 Ibid., p. xviii.
"In order to save the very individual soul from decline which is sapping it, we must dip it again in the boiling vat of the social Soul, through self-sacrifice to the active and fighting community."

31 Romain Rolland, Quinze Ans de Combat 1919-1934, (Paris: Rieder, 1935), p. lvii.
I Will Not Rest, trans. K.S. Shelvankar, (New York, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1937), p. 60.
"Jean-Christophe, Colas, Clérambault, Annette and her son, lived and for all men. The idea never occurred to them of separating their causes from that of society - not even to'the one against all' who resisted others in order to save them. And they fused themselves with those people either in spirit, or in the works they fashioned, or by their personal sacrifices. They were themselves a people a toiling people, ever on the job. Their individuality is in its essence collective."

32 Romain Rolland, unpublished letter to Jean Herbert, December 1935, available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris.

33 Romain Rolland, Quinze Ans de Combat 1919-1934, p. xxxviii.
I Will Not Rest, p. 43.
"But they are not, however, pure intellectuals. They know how to come to terms with life. They are excellent servants.
I have expressed my bitterness in the penultimate volumes of L'Ame Enchantée. The experiences of the youthful Marc, 'struggling in the deserts of individualism', were my own. But I had the advantage over Marc of sixty years of a life of hardships that harden the skin...Gaudet patientia duris..."

34 Ibid., p. xxxix and cit. transl., p. 43.
"The sacrifice was over. Marc and Annette knew that they will pay for it. And from November, 1918, the Mater Dolorosa bore in advance the grief of her son."

35 Romain Rolland, *Gandhi et Romain Rolland: Correspondence*, p. 418.
Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Correspondence, p. 588.

> "the victorious example of what Gandhi himself has called '*The sword of self-sacrifice*'."

36 Romain Rolland, *La Vie de Ramakrishna*, p. 96.
Prophets of the New India, pp. 60-61.

> "Maya is Shiva (all living beings are God). Who then dare talk of showing mercy to them? Not mercy, but service, service to man must be considered as service to God."

37 Romain Rolland, *L'Ame Enchantée*, pp. 1358-1359.

> "And far from withdrawing into the dream of the One, which the flute of the goat-herd had opened to her, she drew from it the energies from the depth of the earth by means of her roots; and she transfused them into action. What would be the One, if the blood of action did not circulate in it? The One is in action. The One is on the march. If it stopped for only one moment, everything would collapse."

38 Romain Rolland, *La Vie de Ramakrishna*, p. 99.
Prophets of the New India, p. 62.

> "[in] divine communion with living, loving, suffering humanity."

39 Romain Rolland, *L'Ame Enchantée*, p. 849.
The Soul Enchanted, Vol. 4, "The Death of a World", trans. Amalia de Alberti, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1933), p. 150.

> "But they spoke - for lack of acting. They spoke, spoke of the deeds that they did not, that they could not do. And they went away depleted, sick of themselves and each other. Action! Action! Oh, womb of action to be fertilized!...A healthy nation has always need of some goal for its efforts...Crime is better than the sickening emptiness of a life withering in sterility!"

40 Romain Rolland, *L'Ame Enchantée*, p. 489.
The Soul Enchanted, Vol. 3, "Mother and Son", p. 75.

> "a robust swimmer who wished to cross a river and swim against the current. Or like those migrating birds that fly against the wind."

41 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Vivekananda et l'Evangile Universel, p. 247.
Prophets of the New India, p. 457.

"As in a quadriga he held the reins of all four ways of truth, and travelled along them all simultaneously towards Unity."

42 Romain Rolland, L'Ame Enchantée, p. xvii.

"'drawn by four horses', incarnate this desperate effort to realize 'the black honey of discords'".

43 Ibid., p. 999.
The Soul Enchanted, Vol. 4, "The Death of a World" p. 350.

"One isn't a man (you, I, he) if one has not confronted life in its burrow and left pieces of one's skin in it. We must, we must pass through filth and thorns!"

44 Romain Rolland, letter to his Italian friend, Sofia Bertolini Guerrieri-Gonzaga, April 1, 1925, in Chère Sofia Cahier 11, (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1960), pp. 299-301.

"It (truth) is my highest passion.
I would feel dishonoured, if I failed it."

45 Ibid.

"I am certain that, if God exists, he is with all sincere and disinterested souls. If they err, they are to be deplored and not condemned. But their main task is, first, - not to lie to themselves. And nothing will take away from my thought the conviction that thus they are faithful to the mission they have received from God. God is Truth. If a frank soul errs, who can tell that this error is not in God's plan, - that this sincere error was not wished for and blessed by God? - Let us all be humble and tolerant, towards each other."

46 Romain Rolland, l'Ame Enchantée, p. 116.
The Soul Enchanted, Vol. 1, "Annette and Sylvie" trans. Ben Ray Redman, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1925), pp. 257-258.

"But I would like, in exchange for the gift of mutual affection, that each should preserve the right to live according to his own soul, to walk in his own way, to seek his own truth, to secure, if need be, his own field of activity, - to carry out, in a word, the proper law of his own spiritual life, and not sacrifice himself to the law of another, even the dearest person of all: for no one has the right to immolate another's soul, or his own for the sake of another. It is a crime."

47 Ibid., p. 206.
The Soul Enchanted , Vol. 2, "Summer" trans. Eleanor Stimson and Van Wyck Brooks (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1925), p. 72.
"Freedom and humanity."

48 Ibid., p. 272 and cit. transl., p. 161.
"By the new light of this law of labor, everything became clear to her. The old faiths were put to the test, and a new morality rose on the ruins of the old, cemented on this heroic foundation. The morality of freedom, the morality of strength, not of Pharisaism and debility..."

49 Ibid., p. 139.
The Soul Enchanted, Vol. 1, "Annette and Sylvie", p. 307.
"The sole true morality, according to the true life, would be a morality of harmony."

50 Ibid., p. 392.
The Soul Enchanted, Vol. 2, "Summer", p. 318.
"could not lie to herself."

51 Ibid., p. 117.
The Soul Enchanted, Vol. 1, "Annette and Sylvie", p. 259.
"profound needs of the soul."

52 Ibid.
"more religiously free"

53 Ibid., p. 499.
The Soul Enchanted, Vol. 3, "Mother and Son", p. 22.
"accepted war as she accepted death, as she accepted life."

54 Ibid., p. 471 and cit. transl., p. 52.
"the seven deadly sins, vices and cruelty"

55 Ibid.

"However bad, however low you may be, be true!"

56 Ibid., p. 725 and cit. transl., p. 403.
"Frankness consists in being frank in all one's thoughts, in not deceiving any one, especially oneself, about what one believes. But it doesn't demand from us the impossible: only that we should always and entirely act in accordance with what we believe. Our spirit alone is free. Our body is enchained. We are slaves of society. We submit to its order. We cannot destroy it without destroying ourselves."

57 Ibid., p. 731 and cit. transl., p. 410.
"- If deceit disappeared entirely from life, would not life itself disappear? Isn't that the thing which keeps up the great Illusion?
- If it cannot exist without it, if it is the great Illusion, that is because it is not the true life. The true life is beyond. It must be found again.
- Where is it?
- In me, in you, in this need for the truth. How could it possess us if it did not breathe in us?"

58 Ibid., p. 711. and cit. transl., p. 384.
"And in Marc's feverish mind she reappeared - the Mother. Her proud image and her silence, her life, full of trials and passions that were not profaned, that soul of hers, with its integrity and straightforwardness, her contempt for words, the depths of her uncompanioned solitude and that uncompromising will against which he had rebelled, which he had hated, which he blessed today, her inflexible law of truthfulness."

59 Romain Rolland, La Vie de Ramakrishna, p. 51.
Prophets of the New India, p. 24.
"only hope of survival"

60 Romain Rolland, L'Ame Enchantée, p. 999.
The Soul Enchanted, Vol. 4, "The Death of a World", pp. 349-350.
"What for? How do I love him?...I love him as one loves because I am hungry. But one does not merely hunger for the body. That hunger can be cheated. I have cheated it more than once. But there is another hunger that cannot be cheated, and which does not cheat: I hunger for truth, I hunger for cleanness. And your son is true, he is clean in mind. He is

clean, as you are... Come! I know what I am talking about. So do you...Do you think one can be mistaken, when one has struggled, as I have for six years in the stagnant pool of these souls of today? And when I meet one, emerging, intact, how can I not pounce upon him?"

61 Ibid.
"naked flesh and naked soul"

62 Ibid., p. 795 and cit. transl., p. 77.
"Be what you like! Do what you like! Fly if you like! But say 'I fly'!"

63 Ibid., p. 797 and cit. transl., p. 80.
"the best judge"

64 Ibid., p. xvii.
"'This duel of the soul' was being given in my mind, which duel I have discharged on young Marc's shoulders."

65 Ibid., p. 797.
The Soul Enchanted, Vol. 4, "The Death of the World", p. 81.
"the conflicting forces of his nature."

66 Ibid.
"let him be frank"

67 Ibid., p. 809 and cit. transl., p. 96.
"But at bottom there is still Marc the Marcassin who, as soon as they tried to catch him, recovered himself, with a fierce eye and a blow with his cutting remark. It made him all the more attractive. One got hurt. Double pleasure!"

68 Ibid., p. 788 and cit. transl., p. 68.
"vindicate their independent soul against all the fatalities that oppress it"

69 Ibid., p. xi.
"a compartment of the great Illusion"

70 Ibid., p. xi.

"vital power, the power of illusion and dream, the vital impetus... perpetually creates and renews, 'the great Magician'."

71 Ibid., p. 724.
The Soul Enchanted, Vol. 3, "Mother and Son", p. 402.
"I am of you. I am what you have made me."

72 Ibid., p. xi.
"All her life long, 'The Soul Enchanted' divests herself of the tissues of illusions which mask her. At the fall of each tissue, she feels she is naked. But another tissue takes the place of the preceding one."

73 Romain Rolland, unpublished letter to his Japanese friend, Ozaki, June 3, 1927, available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris.
"It is here that, at last stripped of its last veils which mask it, 'disenchanted', the reawakened Soul, must contemplate the body of God."

74 Romain Rolland, L'Ame Enchantèe, p. xviii.
"The giving birth of an era through the voluntary sacrifice of a generation. And the giving birth of the Mother through the Son."

75 Ibid.
"the boiling vat of the Soul of society"

76 Ibid.
"through active self-sacrifice to the community which is on the march and fighting."

77 Ibid.
"which is dying"

78 Ibid.
"He wrenches himself free from the lies and rubbish by paying with his skin and blood. He denounces them, and falls, at the threshold of a new era, which the harsh and bare Confession of his whole life had prepared."

79 Ibid.

"But his very death is a birth...'Stirb und werde!...!' He gets up, and continues, in the bosom of the two women who have borne him, the lover and the mother. Annette takes over the ascent of the staircase, at the very level where the feet of her son stopped. And the son ascends with the mother. He is in her. Annette says it to Assia: 'The laws of the world are upset. I have given birth to him. And it's he who gives birth to me, in his turn."

80 Ibid., p. 1053.
"considered as crime any constraint exercises on the soul of another person."

81 Ibid., p. 1105.
"It was not the first time that I was consulted on the itinerary of life: I was a kind of travel Agency; and I had directed more than one young man or woman, either towards Asia or towards Moscow: for more than one person bears in his pupils the reflection of one of the stars which rise in the East."

82 Ibid., p. 1105.
"fever of action"

83 Ibid., p. 1106.
"_Your_ truth is _your_ nature. Do not betray, do not violate your nature by espousing that of another person."

84 Romain Rolland, _La Vie de Vivekananda et l'Evangile Universel_, p. 255.
Prophets of the New India, p. 468.
"Eaglets of Europe, we need not renounce any part of our real nature. Our real nature is in the nest, whence we formerly took our flight; it dwells within those who have known how to keep the keys of our keep the Sovereign Self."

85 Romain Rolland, _L'Ame Enchanté_, p. 1107.
"However that was, I thank those who were talking to him according to the law, the unique law of truth! For he was understanding now better than before, that this law was his: it was his mission to be true. To suffer, to err, to contradict himself, even to fall and to get dirty but to be true. We will get up again. We will wash ourselves. A frank soul

cannot be damned. The worm of death cannot gnaw the incorruptible truth. And Marc's heart swelled at the thought that this proper law of truth, with which his nature was marked, was also, without his knowing it, the core of Gandhi's soul, towards whom a blind instinct of defense had driven him, - though he did not have to follow the same path. (I had revealed to him the Credo of the little frail and unbreakable man, who was leading three hundred million men: - 'Truth is God')."

86 Ibid., p. 1109.
"There is no God for those with empty stomachs!"

87 Ibid., p. 1386.
"There was a lack of money, the little beaks were in an abyss, and the words of God, or of Sylvie, do not feed empty stomachs."

88 Ibid., p. 1359.
"The same thought which, in the veins of Gautama, is the smile of Nirvâna, - in those of a daughter of Europe is the protective smile of Athena in the battle."

89 Ibid.
"When she recognizes herself in this river, with criss-cross moires, where his Saint-Bruno of the Himalayas shows her the image of the ego with myriads of individualities, - when she finds in it, among others, pass her own moire, and all the round which is proceeding eddily towards the Ocean as well as the retinue of the Indian Bacchus - there is not at all the risk of this wisdom, this sacred ecstasy of Asia, which is awakening in the soul of Europe deep echoes (for they are daughters of the same mother), making her lose her devouring activity. She loses herself in this moving mass to find herself again multiplied."

90 Romain Rolland, Inde: Journal 1915-1943, p. 14.
"it has become evident that Europe can no longer depend but on itself to save itself. Its thought needs the thought of Asia, as the latter can derive profit by relying on the thought of Europe. They are the two hemispheres of the brain of humanity."

91 Romaine Rolland, L'Ame Enchantée, p. 1461.

> "The crushed and distended soul becomes enlarged, it enters the body of the sovereign Being. By hollowing it out he incorporates it: - 'You are mine, and I am yours.' Oh! Fullness! Identity!"

92 Ibid., p. xii.
"the clutches of illusions"

93 Romain Rolland, letter to his Italian friend, Sofia Bertolini Guerrieri-Gonzaga, November 11, 1927, in Chére Sofia, Cahier 11, pp. 311-314.

94 (Epigraph to this chapter) Romain Rolland, unpublished letter to his editor, Maurice Delamain, November 26, 1929, available at the Romain Rolland Archives in Paris.

> "I was, I have remained profoundly European. I have not renounced anything of my own nature. But I realize that it accomplished itself fully by rejoining the paths of those free spirits of India."

CONCLUSION

In the course of our investigation, we have pointed out the fact that Rolland's deep conviction regarding the moral greatness of Asia had encouraged him to turn towards India at a time when he was bitterly disappointed by a Europe senselessly engaged in a suicidal war. The salvation of the world, he believed, rested on a meeting of the West with the moral and spiritual energies engendered by Indian thought. He therefore decided to study the teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda with a view to bring home to Westerners those aspects of Vedantic thought which are all-embracing and within the reach of one and all regardless of race or creed. This endeavour is to be considered as a very significant part of the noble task he had given himself, namely, the reconciliation of mankind.

It would be wrong to consider Rolland's contribution to Indian studies in the context of the works of either the German or even the French Indologists. Their specialized and scholarly studies of Indian thought, he believed, were not within the reach of the public. Hence his popularizing enterprise. However, we should bear in mind that his aim was far from converting his Western reader into an Asian. If there are two words that can describe his approach to Indian thought in the most fitting way, they are definitely "synthesis" and "syncretism". And it is mainly due to this new approach that he was very successful as a popularizer right from the beginning. Let it be noted that his aim was to unite the East and the West through a meeting of their respective wisdom.

Those who have asserted that Rolland has been a spiritual ambassador of India to the West have, no doubt, paid him due tribute. We may safely say that his deep love and appreciation of India and its thought are fairly comparable to Max Muller's. He not only considered himself as a descendant of the Aryans but also identified his own thought with Indian thought right from the beginning of his Indian experiment. Hence the enthusiasm with which he embarked upon his study of the life and teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. It was with a deep conviction of the universal validity of these teachings that he gladly decided to be India's spokesman in the West and it was with a rare zeal that he revealed to his fellow-Westerners the great tolerance, love and unity which are the very soul of Indian thought. After having done this in his work on the famous Indian spiritual leaders he showed his faith in Vedantic thought by using it in his great novel, L'Ame Enchantée, not as a décor or exoticism but rather as ideas that are valid. Indeed, he stated something meaningful when he told an Indian friend that he (the latter) would feel much at home in the world he has described in that novel. It is only fair to say, then, that his interest in Indian thought was deep and his desire to popularize that thought, a genuine one.

Testimonies regarding the achievement of Rolland in popularizing Vedantic thought in the West abound. In the West, those who were fascinated by the moral and spiritual message that his Essai sur la Mystique et l'Action de l'Inde Vivante had brought to them, wrote to him to express their gratitude. In India, where his work was translated in all languages and dialects, his significant contribution to the dissemination of Vedantic thought in the West was spontaneously recognized by the Ramakrishna Order. Mahatma Gandhi may have found it fit to call him a "Rishi" before he had even thought of writing on Indian thought but for the millions of Indians he became an elder brother and France the country of Romain Rolland. Many are the Indians who confessed to him that they came to know Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and their teachings better through his work. But that was not all the French writer did for Indian thought: he also contributed to the foundation of a Ramakrishna Mission Centre in France for the propagation of Vedantic teachings. It was no doubt with a rare feeling of satisfaction that he welcomed, on March 30, 1938, the first representative of that Centre, Swami Siddheswarananda and great was his joy when, three years later, he learned that the latter had started lecturing on the famous Indian philosopher, Shankara, at the Université de Montpellier and that his friend, Jean Herbert, a well-known Indologist, was disseminating Vedantic thought through his publications. Would it, then, be an exaggeration to say that his desire to popularize Indian thought in the West was deep-rooted and ardent? Our investigation has made it possible for us to assert, with conviction, that Rolland's contribution to Indian studies, though not a scholarly one in the true sense of the word, is a significant one. It is indeed with a remarkable power that he has been able to scrutinize Vedantic thought and present it to his Western readers in a palatable way unlike the great scholars of Indology. The great number of positive comments on his work allow us to conclude that he was successful, to some extent, in achieving his aim which was to reconcile the thought of the East with that of the West, considered by him to be the two hemispheres of the human spirit. His achievement is all the more brilliant for, like Max Muller, he was never able to see his beloved land of the Vedas and the Ganges and the time it took him to accomplish his feat was relatively short. In the matter of zeal and enthusiasm, his was fairly comparable to Max Muller's own and indeed both men deserved the great admiration and deep gratitude India has bestowed upon them.

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